LEADING CURRICULUM CHANGE – DEVELOPING INQUIRY BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Thesis Submitted to the University of Nottingham

for the degree of Doctor of Education

July 2014

Abstract

Throughout my professional journey, I have encountered many thought provoking experiences which have, not only helped to shape my practice, but have also encouraged me to deeply question my purpose as a leader within education. Children growing up in the 21st century will encounter rapid change within their lives. The question that resonates deeply within me is **what** and **how** do we teach them today so that they are better prepared for tomorrow's world? It is this concern that provides the impetus for this research.

The idea of learning being placed at the heart of the core business of leadership is embodied in what is understood as Instructional Leadership. Through practitioner action research, this study investigates the leadership of curriculum change that takes full account of the views of children. It explores the kind of actions that need to be undertaken as a leader to effect curriculum change; actions that serve to locate the child as the lead learner. In developing an inquiry based approach to teaching and learning, this study investigates how resources and the tool and artefacts of teaching are deployed, pedagogical strategies implemented and considers the development of a cultural, emotional and cognitive climate conducive to inquiry learning.

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this work to my mother who retains the wonderful spirit of the ***child*** and to my father who left this world without ever having had the opportunity to embrace ***childhood***; to my brother for the special bond that we shared as ***children*** and for always being able to answer my questions however remote; to my partner who seeks to understand my ***childish*** ways and for the enduring love and support; and to my beautiful son who lights up my life with the joys of ***childhood*** and for providing the inspiration for my work.

Contents

Chapter 1 – The Journey

A Prologue – letting children have their say

I spent yesterday decorating our cave and getting everything ready for the party. But I'm also going to cook her a surprise supper as a special birthday treat. The problem is that Mum is a fussy eater. " I don't eat kings, she says, they're too rich." "I don't eat princesses, she says, they're too sweet." "I don't eat knights, she says, I don't like tinned food."

So I was glad to find Jack. Look at him: he's fresh, there's plenty of good meat on him and he smells delicious. "I want to have you for supper," I said. He didn't scream. He didn't run away. He didn't try to hide. He said "Thank you! No one's ever had me to supper before." And he gave me a big hug….

And we had such fun at the party! Jack was brilliant at 'pass the castle' and 'pin the tail on the dragon'. Usually Mum doesn't like me playing with my food, but this time I couldn't help myself. I took Jack up to my room and showed him all my toys.

Soon it was time to get supper ready. Somehow I wasn't looking forward to it as much as I was expecting. "Don't worry," said Jack. "It must be boring washing vegetables on your own, I'll help you." So we washed them together….

I must say, Jack did look a bit surprised when I put him into the cooking pot…. "I always wash my hands before supper," he said "But I don't usually have a bath as well, you ogres must be very clean!"…

"You know, there aren't any other children where I live so I don't get to play with anyone very often. Today has been the best day ever." And that made me think of all the time I've asked people if they'd like to play with me. They usually scream and runaway.

It's a funny thing. Chopping onions always makes me cry. But there are times when you have to do things that are very difficult. This was one of those times. So I got on with cooking supper.

And that day (you're going to hate me for this). That day I cooked (but I really didn't have any choice). That day I cooked my mum a supper (I mean what would you have done?). That day I cooked my Mum a supper of…. vegetable stew. SURPRISE! Mum said it was the best meal she'd ever eaten and I had to agree. After all, it's not every day you have your best friend for supper!

A précis of a wonderful tale written by Timothy Knapman (2010) entitled 'Little Ogre's Surprise Supper'. Speaking from the perspective of the 'child', he relates

a charming story about a young character who has to make decisions about his actions. Finally, the little ogre does not pursue the path destined to him from birth, he chooses to act differently. Because he emotionally engages with his newly acquired friend, reason enables him to choose a different path to the one that is familiar to him. I wonder if all children would do this if given an interesting curriculum; one that they can engage with irrespective of their inherited value system or the path that is likely to be determined for them due to their origins of birth.

As a primary school teacher, where better to recount my journey through research than from the voice of the child? This short story encapsulates much of what I am attempting to achieve professionally and through my research. It is my desire to recognise, more fully, the voice of the child and attempt to reflect this in educational practices that captures my imagination. It is my view that one of the biggest mistakes that we make in education is to under estimate children's capacity to make decisions. Yes, of course, decision making can be confusing, challenging and sometimes children get it wrong, but they can make them and learn from their errors! This is perhaps why we so often see education done ***to*** children instead of ***with*** them. Children can make age appropriate, important decisions providing they are equipped with the emotional, thinking and reasoning skills to do so. They also need to be motivated to make a decision and allowed to engage emotionally with the things that they need to make choices about. In this respect, children will engage with learning that motivates them and make positive decisions in support of this. If we introduce children to opportunities that equips them to make relevant choices then, just like the little character in the opening extract, we may be more likely to educate a generation of children who think and reflect responsibly on their actions as well as achieve academic excellence. Neither of these should be mutually exclusive and the former can significantly impact on the latter. I also believe that if, we are to change the path destined for some children then we need to search wider afield for the strategies that we employ in the classroom. Successive years of a principally knowledge based curriculum is not delivering standards for all learners.

Introduction

The prologue opens this work by outlining the importance of the voice of the child and how their experiences shape who they are, their perspective. It is acknowledgement of this that underpins my professional work; it is this professional understanding that I bring to this practitioner research.

From a leadership perspective, it would be so much simpler if we could just hear, and respond to the voices of the children, their parents and the people directly responsible for children's education. However this is perhaps naïve? Children are not educated in a vacuum, neither do teachers teach or leaders lead in a vacuum. We are all subject to the social and cultural context in which we live and work. This opening chapter traces some of the political influences prevalent over the preceding twenty years and their impact on teaching. Tracing the development of my own professional experience, it is argued that the prevailing political stance taken towards education has had a constraining effect on the contextual curriculum opportunities given to children. The need to achieve standards through a prescribed model, which only measure certain aspects of pupil performance, has exacerbated this constraining element. This chapter further explores the challenges faced by education and places this research within the context in which the school operates. In order to meet the demands of twenty first century society, a school curriculum must necessarily deliver, not just knowledge, but the skills and aptitudes necessary to think, problem solve and communicate effectively. It is acknowledged that my perspective is one which proposes inquiry learning as one suitable method for facilitating the learning needs of twenty first century children. I also introduce the research project, the research question and outline the thesis structure.

The Impetus for Research: the Practitioner in this Practice-based Study

Recognising that one of the wider responsibilities of leadership is to support organisations responsible for the training and development of future teachers, I currently serve on a management group, as a primary school representative, for a university local to my school. As part of my role contributing to the recruitment of trainee teachers, I annually assist with the interviewing and appointment process. Each year I never fail to be impressed with the extensive knowledge and understanding of education that candidates display during the interview process, whether this be child focused, curriculum or political. I recall during my own interview for a place as a trainee teacher being asked to relay my views about the then controversial introduction of 'Baker Days' (named after the political character whose persistence led to the inception of five days allotted for the purpose of professional development). Not having one iota of a clue as to what the interviewer was referring to, I had to admit ignorance but promptly

assured her that I simply wanted to help children 'get a better start in life'. Fortunately, the interviewer forgave my lack of political savvy, and shortly afterwards, I began my journey working in education.

I began my career at the outset of the National Curriculum. Although the advent of the National Curriculum was possibly a key factor determining the tides of change; the world that I entered as a teacher is vastly different from the one that I work in today; as is the expectation placed upon new recruits to the profession. Additionally, my own professional experience would suggest that persons new to the profession are acutely aware of the role that political influences exercise on educational systems. However, the justification that I gave to the interviewer during my early career remains unchanged. I came into education to give children a better start in life and this is still the ambition that provides the impetus for my work today.

Having worked in a number of challenging contexts both as a teacher and in a leadership capacity, I was able to learn my craft from many capable professionals. Previously challenging experiences also enabled me to acquire and demonstrate a set of skills that secured effective systems which enabled children to learn and demonstrate progress. As a result of this, in 2002, I had the good fortune to be appointed to the role of Head Teacher of a new primary school in the Midlands.

Within this new school, having set up systems that supported effective teaching and learning and recruiting from scratch, we were very quickly able to establish a culture of high expectations and attainment. From a broadly average on entry baseline of prior standards, we managed to ensure that the vast majority of children left the school attaining above average (using SATs in the core areas of English, Mathematics and Science as a performance measure) irrespective of their starting point on entry. What I had not anticipated was that this high performance agenda would take on a life of its own. Yes, the reputation of the school was growing and it was becoming the preferred choice for local families. We were also adhering to the government performance agenda in that the children were attaining highly but something felt wrong. Our success was beginning to change the culture of the school. I felt that the reason that we were successful in the first instance was due to a clear focus on engaging and motivating children. As time passed, this was being lost in some aspects of practice due to a pressure to conform to an agenda that was not entirely child centred. Consequently, I frequently found myself sitting in the office pondering why I was doing this at all. Of course I wanted to secure standards but I was not entirely sure that the yard stick to measure standards was the one that wholly aligned with my belief about what education should be. I wanted to find

something that delivered standards which matched up to those being espoused by the government at the time but also echoed my philosophy regarding how young children should be educated. I began to question deeply what it actually means to be given a 'better start in life'.

Speaking from the perspective of the child, Beare (2001, p17) poignantly asks

"So do you know what to teach me? Do you know what I need to learn? And do you know how to teach me? Are you confident that you can design a curriculum which will equip me to live in my world? My name is Angelica. I am 5 years old. And I am sitting in one of your classroom today."

This question not only resonates deeply with me as a parent of a young child but also as a leader responsible for facilitating the learning of today's children so that they can take their place in tomorrow's world. It seems very transparent to me that giving children 'a better start in life' must necessarily involve an educational experience that: meaningfully attends to their social and emotional development and integrates this with cognitive experiences; provides a real context for learning that utilizes technology purposefully; embraces a wide range of areas that are culturally relevant to children; and respectfully engages their interest so that they develop a genuine quest for knowledge and self- sustain their learning in life. When you consider that twenty first century children are likely to work for 17 different organisations in their lifetime (Beare, 2001), they also need to develop the capacity to reflect and the emotional resilience required to cope with change. Imposing a curriculum and a prescribed way of being as a learner does not seem to me to meet the remit of providing learning experiences fit for the 21 century.

It was the desire to promote a more contextually appropriate curriculum that led to my emphasis on inquiry. If schools are to meet the needs of students, then it is vital that we enable them to develop the skills necessary to cope with the unpredictability of an ever changing world and develop ways to acquire new kinds of knowledge (Sahlberg, 2011). The objective of inquiry learning is to integrate the acquisition of, what is recognised as, traditional knowledge with the capacity to think like an inquirer. This involves developing the skills of finding out, problem solving, theorising and transforming information (Aulls & Shore, 2008). As there is currently no evidence from practice or other forms of research that distinguishes good and poor quality inquiry teaching, leadership linked to the development of practice became a key concern. The intention, therefore, was to develop a model of practice that was effective in our school context and secured the motivation of the children by engaging them in the learning process.

The Research

The research project that I outline throughout this work addresses my attempt to answer some of the questions that my professional experience presented me with. This is addressed through practitioner inquiry. My aspiration as a leader was, and is, to create a school in which children feel inspired to learn - an education that attends to the holistic child as well as the academic standards that they attain. To achieve this, I believed it was necessary to: create a curriculum which secured high levels of pupil engagement as well as standards, attended to the development of positive attitudes for learning and imparted skills to enable the children to direct their own learning to a degree commensurate with their age. I began with the supposition that an inquiry curriculum would help me to achieve my professional objectives. The following purpose statement outlines my focus for practitioner inquiry.

The purpose of this research is to investigate what I need to do as a Head Teacher in order to facilitate change to develop a curriculum that provides opportunities for child initiated inquiry across the primary phase of my school. The central focus of the study is to gain an insight into the views of others within the school to inform my practice as a Head Teacher in leading and managing curriculum change.

The following discussion outlines the external and internal context that had an impact on this research. Additionally, my own professional perspective and the bearing that this had in shaping the research agenda is addressed.

The External Context

In Britain, beginning with the economic recession of the 1980s, political, changes within this country, and those happening wider afield were quick to exert pressure on private industry. Speaking of the transfer of this pressure to the public sector, Leithwood and Jantzi (2009, p41) suggest "The confluence of force pressing on schools during this period resulted in a combination of heightened expectations for improved student performance, highly aggressive state and national policies for holding school much more publically accountable for such improvement and diminished financial resources." Eighteen years of Conservative Party leadership in Britain came to an end in 1997 when, under the guise of New Labour, a Labour government came to power. Although emanating from a different philosophical stance, this government appeared to echo similar values to its predecessor with regard to educational policy thus emphasising competition, the rhetoric of rising standards and purporting a competitive

business model of education (Tomlinson, 2005). There was also a significant rise in the centralisation of the curriculum and policy in education during under the guidance of New Labour. The following traces this development.

Following a lengthy period of political debate about dwindling standards for the masses of children, a National Curriculum was introduced into education in England and Wales in 1988. Legitimised by the Education Act of 1988, the inception of the National Curriculum began a centralising tendency towards education that is still evident today. Throughout my own professional life, I have been an advocate of the political desire to expect the very best for all children irrespective of their socio economic status. Whilst there is recognition that some circumstances present greater challenges than others, it is no longer permissible to attribute low achievement to the virtues bestowed to children as a consequence of their birth. I believe that setting curriculum entitlement and national expectation for all children has played a significant part in helping to facilitate this change.

Difficulties do arise, however, in a curriculum model that so heavily prescribes content. Elliot (2001) proposes a less prescriptive curriculum that offers flexibility and scope for teachers (and children, in my view) to organise content that meets the learning needs of particular pupils. He also justly points out that early conceptions of the National Curriculum omitted any attention to the social and personal development of children and, subsequently, large numbers of children failed to engage with learning. For Elliot (2001) it is important for any curriculum to consider socially inclusive pedagogies that guide pupil engagement. He further suggests that there must not be an automatic assumption that giving teachers freedom to select and structure curriculum content and associated strategies for delivery of the curriculum will result in significant and appropriate pedagogical changes. This is an important issue that Elliot (2001) highlights and one which is supported by this research. As I shall trace through the following chapters, there is not necessarily a cohesive and collective view among staff within a school about pedagogy and the process of learning. The development of a curriculum must not solely be about content and skills but the whole pedagogy underpinning its implementation. The perspectives held about learning will inevitably determine the ways in which the curriculum is organised (Craft, 2005).

Alongside the introduction of the National Curriculum, the reforms of the Conservative Government from 1998 to 1994 included the creation of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the introduction of league tables. In 1994, the Conservative government established a non-departmental public body to fund teacher training which was known from its inception as the Teaching and

Training Agency (TTA). This was in response to the severe shortage of teachers that England faced prior to this period. The establishment of this agency provided standardization for expectations placed upon universities that had formerly contextually determined the quality and content of teacher training courses. The TTA also provided a diversity of routes for entry into the teaching profession. Notably, borrowing a model previously operating in the private school sector, a 'learning by doing' route was established; this operated on a postgraduate student of employment option. This model involved students spending lengthy periods of time engaged in school practice to acquire teaching skills and provided access to successful graduates without formal teaching qualifications and is still the favoured, and expanding, model today. The role of the TTA was expanded in 2005 to include a remit for the continuous profession development and support of existing teachers and transformed to the Training and Development Agency (TDA). Met with resistance from teacher training providers, reform in teacher training was by no means an easy path. Over a ten year period England experienced a national shortage of teachers in some subject areas which resulted in the agency assuming a more direct role in the recruitment of teachers. Following additional investment by the then Labour government, in 2004 the largest number of teachers were recruited to the professions compared to the past three decades.

The second term of the Labour Government saw the establishment of new expectations within schools and a new relationship between schools and the community. The teaching workforce was remodelled to maximise resources and expand the role of support staff and the extended schools programme was initiated. The latter placed greater emphasis upon schools to participate in vocational areas as well as academic concerns and widened the remit of schools to incorporate health, family learning and out of hours learning for children. From 2002 onwards the role of Teaching Assistants was expanded to create Higher Level Teaching Assistants who, under the planning direction of teachers, could lead the learning of classes of children. During this political period, state schools were also required to evaluate their performance within the parameters set by a national self- evaluation framework (SEF). This structure provided very defined areas to focus the attention of leadership covering all aspects of the wider remit for schools which included achievement and attainment of pupils, wellbeing, care and safety, pupil behaviour, extended provision, community and partnership work and, of course, leadership itself. This system clearly implied what the expected recipe for a successful school looked like. While schools are still required to evaluate their performance today, the prescriptive format ceased when the Labour Governments was replaced by Conservative leadership in 2011.

Transition is a feature of all aspects of life; all of the national political changes in England have inevitably been influenced by international perspectives which have resulted in change. There is to recognise the ways in which external contexts impact on individual organisations and those working within them. The way in which nations are increasingly being drawn together through developments in communication through information technology is often referred to as globalisation (Reith, 1999). The challenges faced by education, over the past two decades, as a result of competing interests and imperatives imposed from the political context in which schools operate have influenced policy and practice within them. Legislation has altered practice and challenged pre-existing values that underpin educational contexts. The pervasive ideology of globalisation has made it necessary for schools to school operate in a similar manner to private enterprise (Bottery, 2004) where the performativity agenda is adhered to by leaders because of external accountabilities imposed upon them (Day, 2003).

Hargreaves (2003) offers a comprehensive analysis of how international political climates and economic forces have an impact on teachers. Discussing what he terms 'teaching in the knowledge society', and tracing its historical development, Hargreaves (2003) maintains that, in response for the need to circulate knowledge in a service based economy, teachers experience a greater degree of pressure to conform to the standards agenda. This agenda requires high level of cognitive achievement but also the capacity to create knowledge and apply it in the context of problem solving, subsequently communicating outcomes effectively. The significant increase and focus upon the promotion of an outcomes based approach to learning has led some commentators to suggest that the individuality of each child can easily be lost (Sommefeldt, 2001).

Against this backdrop of public accountability and competition as a vehicle for delivering high performance, there are many who argue against this and propose a more collective approach to educating children. This emphasises shared responsibility where learners are introduced to new kind of knowledge and skills that equip them to cope with an unpredictable and changing world (Sahlberg, 2011). Emphasising the negative impact that excessive accountability measures have upon teachers, other commentators propose a need for a balance between the need for professionals to be publically accountable and the need to attend to educational objectives (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994).

The rate of change that school have had to endure over the past thirty years is phenomenal. Due to successive Governments' own target agendas, schools have had very little time to imbed new directives and subsequent initiatives. There has certainly been a period of low trust in the capacity of the teaching profession

to play a significant role in the direction that education takes. Rather, a system of public accountability has been imposed, one which punishes those who do not align with the centralised agenda (Sergiovanni, 1999). This has impacted on leadership, not only in terms of the need to attend to an external agenda rather than those contextually driven, but also in terms of the opportunity available for leaders to directly participate with children (Webb, 2005). From my own professional perspective, I have seen a decline in my educative role as a direct participant in teaching towards an increasingly instructional role.

In challenging the prevailing paradigm informing practice within schools over the past thirty years, Lumby (2001, p6) notes "Knowledge is imparted in a sequential process and the ultimate aim is to pass tests through replicating the knowledge which has been taught. Learners experience teaching as a wave which passes over them, lifting them briefly on to a high of knowledge but planting them firmly back on the ground, the knowledge forgotten is no longer relevant." The rationale behind introducing an inquiry curriculum into the school I am leading is precisely in response to the concerns that Lumby (2001) highlights. As discussed, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the rhetoric of standards. This is not to devalue practitioners' delivery of our previous curriculum model which was securing measurable standards. Simply to recognise that, in a world in which what constitutes knowledge is rapidly changing, adequate preparation of children to take their place in this world requires additional dimensions.

Although the emphasis on centralising the curriculum has diminished under the direction of a Conservative Government who rose to power in 2011, my current professional experience suggests that the emphasis on high performance achieved through rigorous accountability measures and competitive strategies remains. Indeed, schools are now required to do, through 'the school led system', and achieve more with less financial backing to support development. Successful schools are now invited to contribute to the development of our educational system by engaging the work of strategic partners to support the work of other schools who are deemed less successful. The business model is definitely well and truly in place and appears to be set to govern the strategic advance of education for the foreseeable future. The long term impact of more recent developments remains to be seen. While, as a school leader, I applaud the opportunity for schools to have an increased input into the direction that education takes, I have concerns about this route in terms of how effective leaders currently lead their organisations and the subsequent impact on teachers and children. Linked to the outcomes of this research and asking the question *who is* and *why are* we actually making a difference to children in our schools, the rational underpinning this concern is discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter.

The Importance of Teachers

I began my career working with young people as a residential social worker. Unsurprisingly, I encountered many children who had been failed by the society bestowed with the responsibility of protecting them. The experience of working with children who began their lives in a disadvantaged position was to provide the initial impetus for me to enter the teaching profession. Fuelled with a passion to make a difference to the lives of disadvantaged young people through high quality educational opportunities, I promptly applied for, and was accepted, onto a teacher training course – the flame had been lit… The fire very quickly became a smouldering ember doused when I found myself, as a student teacher, in an inner city London school in 'challenging circumstances'. In those early stages of my career, I was reminded on a daily basis that I was fairly clueless in the teaching department and my capacity to change the lives of the 'disadvantaged masses' via their education was in need of some serious attention.

With the daily demands of teaching draining the reserves of energy needed to fan the embers of my transformational ambitions, I began to think that my destiny lay elsewhere. Just when I was about to accept that perhaps my future was in: insurance sales, nursing, sports science or pretty much anything apart from teaching, I had the good fortune to observe the practice of a very experienced infant (as they were then called) teacher. Rather than any planned induction procedures, the absence of a classroom support from 'Class One' had resulted in me being partnered with this teacher to help out. Having been in the profession for well over thirty years, I was struck by the superfluity of skills that she seemed blissfully unaware that she possessed. Every interaction with a pupil moved the child's learning forward. She reinforced language, promoted effective social and learning behaviours, created opportunities for problem solving and deepened thinking through questioning - on it went. As a fledgling practitioner, this teacher seemed to me to have every teaching skill imaginable! What I found even more incredible was that she had evidently not planned for this the night before; she moved everything forward from what the child brought into the situation. There were no lever arch files crammed full of pre-conceived and detailed lesson plans (unlike those littering my study), just a very clear direction to take the children in depending on where they were presently situated on their educational journey. In each moment, she had the capacity to spontaneously search the files of her own 'mental cabinet' to plot the next steps for the child. I left the school that day a little more hopeful and finally acknowledging that I would need to be patient with myself and carefully learn my craft in the hope that one day I would develop those skills and aptitudes to enable me to be an effective teacher. My earlier experiences in a residential setting had given me

the resilience and interpersonal skills to survive each day while I was developing the practice of teaching and I am, of course, still on that journey.

The lack of formal attention and overt regard, by successive British governments, given to teachers as professionals capable of informing the direction of the curriculum and pedagogic practices suggests that it is essential to clearly state the importance of teachers. For me, this early encounter in my own career, illustrates the importance that teachers bring to the practice of teaching and learning. Many teachers are so skilled that their work with children is automatic and deeply intuitive. Experienced teachers possess a wealth of implicit knowledge and understanding that has been acquired over many years. This knowledge is invaluable to facilitate the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young minds. The implication of this is for educational research is to tap into, and understand, this potential. In view of my perspective in this regard, the methodology for this research project is clearly informed by my belief that practice must necessarily be partially informed by those subject to, and engaged, within it. For this reason, my methods were selected to enable me to access the views of those I was assigned 'to lead'. Arguing that leadership is widely agreed to be the key factor determining school effectiveness, Durrant and Holden (2006) rightly assert that as school improvement focus on improving pupil learning, it therefore follows that teachers should be focused on leadership of learning.

Over the past few decades, the importance of teacher engagement in the development of practice has gained momentum. Durrant and Holden (2006) make the pertinent point that teachers have a central role in the process of school improvement and therefore acknowledge the importance of listening to teachers' voices. The commentators also argue that, as leadership is a fundamental dimension of humanity, it should be fostered in everyone including teachers in their leadership of learning. It has also been argued, that irrespective of the origins of any innovation, the successful implementation of any initiative requires adaptation at the school level; the onus for implementing and adapting innovation rests with teacher (Hopkins, 2008). Such arguments provide a strong basis for the idea of teachers as researchers as Hopkins (2008, p59) argues "In becoming a teacher-researcher, the individual teacher is deliberately and consciously expanding their role to include a professional element. It is almost inconceivable, then, that they would do this and at the same time ignore the primacy of the teaching/learning process."

The notion of teachers engaging in inquiry with a view to improving practice is taken a step further by Aulls and Shore (2008) in their assertion that teachers need to learn to think like an inquirer, theorising, problem solving and

transforming information to ensure that knowledge of practice becomes visible. The purpose of teacher inquiry is depicted as "The goals of inquiry are discovery, being inquisitive, being a problem finder and a problem solver, being a thinker, and doing what you can to create meaning on your own. The idea of providing knowledge that is meaningful to yourself and others, and using knowledge to accomplish purposes that include those you set yourself or that you believe in, is central to inquiry." (Aulls and Shore, 2008, p23). Their notion of teacher inquiry as a curricular imperative locates reflection as a natural component of inquiry. The authors caution against assuming that reflection is a habit of mind and stress the importance of developing this as an as integral aspect of professional development.

What I have noticed, through my own journey through leadership, is that one's role as a teacher changes. Due to the wider demands of a Head teacher role, it partially becomes one step removed from the child. As a Head Teacher, I am foremost a teacher, albeit more increasingly one of adults than of children (although I still recognise the importance of maintaining instructional skills and experiencing initiatives in action directly with the children). The thread of inquiry is one that is central to all aspect of my practice, as a teacher, a leader and a researcher. In the same way that I wish to develop the children's inquiry skills through the development of an inquiry curriculum and associated practices, I acknowledge the importance of these in adults; both to develop the practice of teaching and in helping to inform my own action as a Head Teacher. In this respect, my methodology has been informed by this understanding and value system. Through my research inquiry, I wanted to access the voice and expertise of the teachers' reflection on experience and their interpretation of it with a view to determining my future leadership action.

The Internal Context

The school of which I am currently the Headteacher is located in the Midlands at the edge of a market town. I was appointed in 2002 when it opened as a brand new primary school intended to cater for the co-educational needs of a community in a developing new housing estate. Although located alongside a relatively affluent region, the school itself attracts families from a broad economic range. The school caters for the learning needs of children from age four to eleven and is organised as a one form entry for cohorts of thirty pupils. 50.5% of current pupils are male and 49.5% female. When originally opened, the school population came from twenty five different primary schools both within and outside the local area. Admission to the school over the past four years indicates that virtually all new pupils now live in close proximity to the school on admission. There is an increasing propensity for some families to move into

rented accommodation and to relocate, within a couple of years, while still holding a place at the school. Other expanding families have moved out of the immediate area to find larger accommodation or to manage financial constraints. Over the past eleven years, 20% of the school's population has been admitted outside the usual admission times.

Economic profile data indicates that the properties in the immediate vicinity of the school range from privately owned, average priced (for the region) terraced two bedroom homes to large five bedroom detached houses. The school also admits pupils from community housing that was build alongside the new homes as part of an agreement between the Council and the building contractors. Initially, a large proportion of the properties surrounding the school were privately rented. From 2002, over a four year period this declined. The recent downward trend in the economy has seen a rapid increase in properties available for rent over the past three years.

For those home that are privately rented, neighbourhood profile information indicates that many families living in close proximity to the school have mortgages on their homes. The majority of people in the neighbourhood commute to their place of work and a major network of roads runs alongside the school. Over 95% of the parent community is aged between twenty five and forty. Contextual data collected from parents suggests that, in two parent heterosexual families, the majority of male partners work full time whereas many of the female parents tend to engage in part time employment. In more affluent families, the female parent tends to remain a full time care giver in the home. Approximately 12% of the school population are female lone parents.

Similar to the range of housing, the economic status of families is also varied. 4% of pupils live in families who receive a very low income. A vast majority of those who work tend to be employed in IDACI C2 or D type posts hence they work in supervisory, clerical, junior managerial or manual positions. As many families have mortgaged homes and all have dependent children, formal and informal discussions with parents indicated that economic security within family life is very susceptible to fluctuations in the national economy.

Being located in a relatively new development, there are very few community services to support families. No community centre or place of worship exists; neither are there any suitable meeting venues aside from a public house. A high proportion of parents whose children attend the school did not grow up in the local town or surrounding villages. In view of this, there tends to be a lack of extended family support. This presents families with the issue of finding trusted child care and places additional cost on family budgets. There is also a lack of social and emotional support for many families when they are experiencing

difficult times and the children have few, easily accessible, extended family role models to support their development. The school is mindful of these factors in the children's lives and has developed extensive wellbeing provision to support children and families from our own resources.

Prior to admission into the school, 97% of new pupils on average attend pre-school provision. As the majority Local Authority schools in the area do not have nursery provision, there is usually less than three out of every thirty pupils entering who arrive from a state run nursery. Prior to admission into full time education, the remaining children have either: been in the care of a child minder, attended a play group or attended a private nursery. Excluding child minders, there are usually around eight early years providers from which the children transfer. There is a vast difference in the quality of learning experience that the children encounter before they start school. As a consequence, the children's social skills, prior cognitive preparation and readiness for school are widely varied.

On entry baseline testing indicates that the children's standardised scores for early literacy, numeracy and social development are broadly average. Out of the annual thirty pupils admitted into the reception class, seven to nine score below average, the same number above national average and the remaining pupils fall in the mid- range. Over the past four years there has been a decline in the on entry literacy baseline of the children entering the school, although this is subject to cohort fluctuations.

The social and cultural mix of the school reflects the diversity within the local community. Just below 12% of the children do not have English as a first language. A similar number have a statement for special needs (seven pupils) or are defined as school action plus for additional support. On an annual basis between 31 and 34 children out of a total of between 210 and 213 are on the school register for special needs. The development of a similar number is very closely tracked and identified as 'target pupils' due to concerns linked to wellbeing, progress or attainment.

The school is led and managed by a Headteacher (me), a deputy head teacher (the school is now on its third deputy head since 2002) and a governing body of 14 (2 staff and 4 parent) people who bring a range of experience and skills to their role. There are five full time and four part time teachers who share the teaching of a cohort of pupils. The school has seven learning support assistants who are assigned to each of the seven year groups and a further six learning support assistants who directly work alongside pupils with a statement of special needs. One person leads the learning of classes under the direction of the teachers and works as a higher level teaching assistant. Four of the learning

support assistants have actually been trained as higher level teaching assistants, although currently only one of these works across the school in this capacity.

The vision of the school is based upon the principles of inclusive and active learning which specifically focuses the children's and adults' attention to: a respectful attitude towards themselves and others, the need to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour and emphasises the importance of reflection in and on the work undertaken in school. A commitment to this vision has established a school which has earned an excellent reputation within the local community. The school is heavily oversubscribed for places in all year groups and each of the seven classes are permanently full with maximum numbers of 30 or 31, if extra children are admitted due to a successful appeal.

The school opened with a full cohort of reception pupils, a year one and two vertically grouped class and a year three, four, five and year six vertically grouped class. All classes had a least thirty pupils and numbers have remained consistent throughout with new pupils replacing those who may have left due to the family relocating. To support vertically grouped classes, I taught every morning at key stage 2 for the first five years of my leadership. From 2002 each new intake of thirty pupils has created one class and this continued across the next six years ultimately forming a one form single year group of pupils. This is now the current structure of the school.

The curriculum is organised into a cycle of themes that have evolved over the years; notably to include a greater emphasis upon inquiry learning over the past four years. Reception class and Key Stage 1 follow the same 18 themes over a three year cycle. Lower Key Stage 1 (year 3 and year 4; age 7 to 9) follow a cycle of 12 themes spread across two years. Similarly, Upper Key Stage 2 (year 5 and year 6; age 9 to 11) follow another set of 12 themes. The National Curriculum units of study have been blocked into these themes and the school has developed a range of child led assessment materials to enable the children to engage in the assessment and evaluation of their progress across all areas of learning. Increasingly, our planning structures focus on the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge with equivalent emphasis. Inquiry learning is now distributed across the academic year and integrated into different disciplines as appropriate. At the end of each year, the final 7-8 week term is dedicated to inquiry. The children understand these themes as 'Your Choice' or 'Freedom' and the learning content of the curriculum is predominately led by the children. Although blocked into themes, the core areas of English and mathematics are taught discretely. This is to allow for the specific development of skills; however, others curriculum areas often provide a stimulus for learning in the core areas. Teachers also attempt to rehearse learning in these areas across all others by

providing relevant and meaningful learning opportunities for the children. To encourage pace and breadth within the curriculum, specific areas of learning are timed across the week. Core areas of learning are always timetabled in morning sessions and separated by an area of learning that requires increased physical activity such as: drama, music, design technology, art, physical education or personal, social and health education plus an assembly and a break.

As previously discussed, on entry baseline data focusing on early language, mathematics and personal and social development indicated a broadly average range of ability. Measures to track the progress of pupils indicate that approximately 60% of pupils annually make good or better progress across Reception and Key Stage One. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage One the numbers of children above average in core areas have increased from between 23% - 30% (as on entry) above average to approximately 43% above average. The number of children below average by the end of KS1 annually reduces to 10% - 16%. A similar profile is evident across the foundation areas (all areas excluding English and Mathematics) of learning except that there tends to be reduced numbers above a below average with around 7% below in some areas and around 33% above in some areas of the curriculum.

Annual analysis of performance data across the school indicates that, as the children stay longer with us, their capacity to progress and overall attainment improves. Over the past few years, a new term has been introduced into political discussion around educational standards namely 'closing the gap'. It is understood to represent the gap between high and low attaining pupils. This has been picked up by those responsible for ensuring that schools are accountable for pupils' performance. I find this an odd and wholly inappropriate phrase to be so freely banded around. In my professional experience this should be impossible; certainly over the span of a primary school education and if all groups of children are maximising their potential. The principle of initiating measures to ensure that all pupils attain in line with, or above, national expectations irrespective of their social or economic status is an excellent one. It is moral and should be the just cause of all educational systems. The funding in the form of 'pupil premium' is also welcomed. However, focusing on the gap between high a low attaining pupils is pointless and somehow diminishes the achievement of high attaining children whilst labelling others. If there is a high then relatively speaking there must be a low. If all primary schools are doing their job effectively, and being fully inclusive, 'the gap' will never close unless there is a ceiling on the learning of some groups of children. Perhaps a phrase that sends a message to children to encourage them to 'be the best you can be' and for schools to facilitate this process free of divisive and unproductive mind-sets would be more apt. If we really do want all children to stand equal then we

need to avoid labels and reinforcing self- fulfilling prophecies. This begins with language and the inference that is drawn from its use. Children's minds are only narrowed and limited by what we 'put into' them!

What we have noticed within the context of the school that I lead is that some children do require a greater degree of intervention to attain in line with, or above national standards; implementing effective strategies and monitoring these has enabled the children to achieve well. Those children who enter into school with a readiness to learn and associated cognitive aptitudes and social circumstances that support learning, respond more quickly to effective teaching and intervention. In view of this, they also achieve extremely well and so the gap remains largely the same. Those children who enter into school with a low baseline but do manage to achieve in line with their formerly higher attaining peers are those who accelerate their learning through a significantly improved approach. This is a purely professional observation but it would be a very interesting line of inquiry for research.

The attainment profile of the children by the time they leave the school at year six (eleven years old) is very high and places the school in the top 1% of schools nationally; this has been sustained over an eight year period. Children who enter into the school below average will leave the school with at least an above average level 4a in most areas of learning. Those who entered above average will leave the school at a level 5a or 6c in most areas of learning. The gap is often still there (except for those children with that 'special approach'), but all of the children will have attained above national expectations and this will give them a good chance of achieving well at secondary school. On average, all children in a cohort of 30 or 31 make at least 2 level progress from Key Stage One to Two with around 40-55% of children making three levels progress across the key stage. The school does not run booster classes or reduce the allotted time for any curriculum area in preparation for national testing. Over the past five years between 72%- 100% of children have attained an above average level 5, or better, in national tests and all of the children taking the tests achieved at least a level 4. Those children who did not take the tests have had a full statement for special educational needs and have transferred to specialist provision at eleven years old.

Over the past three years the school has voluntarily been engaged (often through brokerage by the Local Authority) in a range of outreach work to support colleagues in challenging circumstances. This has involved the leadership of the school, teachers and support staff in mentoring others by working alongside them. It has also resulted in the school receiving a large volume of visitors to disseminate practice.

In 2008 the school was judged by Ofsted to be outstanding in all categories. Due to a maintenance (or increase) in standards over the intervening years, this was revalidated in 2011. This research began at a time when it was important for the school not to stand still. Standards on entry were presenting more of a challenge and the pressure to maintain high outcomes at the middle and upper end of the school was beginning to erode some of the child centred practice that had secured high standards in the first instance. It was also crucial to continue the professional development of the existing staff, to provide the next challenge to secure their professional engagement.

As previously discussed, being a state funded school, adhering to the National Curriculum was a requirement. In view of this, implementing an inquiry curriculum also needed to attend to the content and demands imposed by a national agenda. It was also at a time when schools were being very explicitly directed in terms of their pedagogical practices; this was evident by the national emphasis placed upon the numeracy and literacy strategies. Leadership attention was being drawn towards a particular model of education and organisation by the need to evaluate the effectiveness of policy and practice through a prescribed system of self- evaluation (SEF). There were many externally driven influences constraining teaching and thus a teacher's capacity to respond to the children in their classroom. Similarly these constraining forces were also evident in leadership practice.

The place of teachers as researchers is widely debated; aspects of this have been addressed in the discussion around methodology. In response to the question can teacher do research? Henning, Stone and Kelly (2009, p5) maintain "The answer to this question is a resounding 'you bet we can'! The very act of teaching involves collecting information to improve instruction. While some may not make a conscious effort to do research, reflective teachers constantly plan new strategies, watch how students respond to them and then think about how to make further improvements." I am a teacher and in view of the ever changing external context in which schools operate (implication of which are discussed in the concluding chapter), it is increasingly important to acknowledge this. The follow chapters portray my conscious effort to undertake research with a view to improving my instructional leadership capacity. By collecting information, reflecting upon this, planning strategies in response to it and watching how my 'students' respond, I have implemented a new curriculum that is responsive to the child. Most importantly as well, it delivers even higher standards!

The Structure of the Discussion

The following discussion presents the research in eight subsequent chapters. Beginning with the literature, Chapter 2 addresses the issue of pupil voice and

what other research has contributed to our understanding in this area. As the purpose of this research was to essentially lead curriculum change, an understanding of how the process of change impacts upon teachers is explored. Literature pertaining to the instructional leadership is also explored. This chapter also picks up on a major theme emerging from this research, the importance of social pedagogy.

Beginning by outlining my philosophical stance which is best described as constructivist, Chapter 3 explores some of the literature around practitioner research. The research design is discussed and the rationale for the kinds of tools used in this practitioner research. Ethical concerns are addressed and, more specifically, issues of researching your own school and research involving children.

Drawing on reflective journals, the discussion then moves onto an overview of my leadership journey through leading change. Contextual and external issues emerging through the change process are explored as are the leadership actions that facilitated the change process. Chapter 4 considers the realities of leadership and how the 'resistance' of others and the practical demands of a leadership role can interrupt the path to change. The importance of the leadership of self and how this contributed to the effective leadership of others is also discussed.

The next three chapters take an in depth look at the data and the themes emerging from this research. Chapter 5 examines the voice of the children and their views about teaching and learning. Social pedagogy emerges as a very strong factor in securing children engagement in learning and how they respond to curriculum opportunities. The social dynamics of the classroom and the relationship that they establish with their teacher is presented as a significant factor in determining children's engagement in the learning process. Chapter 6 explores the voice of the staff. The practical and organisational aspects of developing a curriculum are presented as more important to the adult participants of this research compared to the social concerns of the children. The challenge to teacher identity, as a result of the change process, is also addressed. Moving away from existing methods evoked a fear response in many teachers; the leadership implications of this are considered. The implications for leadership emerging from this research are specifically addressed in Chapter 7. The need to consider the social, emotional and cognitive dimensions of a children and adults, when leading change, is addressed. Attention is paid to the processes, tools and artefacts necessary to uncover these needs and embed effective process in practice. The need to understand the values and principles underpinning one's own leadership practice, and how this can drive leadership action, is also explored.

Finally, the contribution that this research makes to our understanding of leadership practice is considered. Proposing a 'responsive instructional model' of

leadership, it is argued that curriculum change can be effectively led and managed if leadership is focused on both the technical and emotional dimensions of teaching and learning. It is further suggested that leadership actions needs to be in response to the needs of children and adults alike and that voice mechanism provide an ideal vehicle to facilitate responsive leadership that can provide a 'safety strap' to support others in times of change.

Chapter 2 – The Literature

Rationale for the Literature Review

The need for this research is largely generated by the external context in which the school was operating at the outset of this project. Caught up in rhetoric of standards, the curriculum being presented to the children and the opportunities for the children to be involved in self- directing their own learning were limited. This was problematic both from the perspective of leadership in adhering to a deeply felt principle regarding the rights of the child and for the future sustainability of standards. Due to an emerging lack of engagement of children in determining their learning journey and staff in determining their practice, the school was becoming too reliant on received practice. This was considered to threaten the future sustainability of standards and the capacity to respond to change and presented a leadership challenge for the next phase of the schools development. In view of this, the review of the literature is focussed on exploring ideas intended to inform professional practice. With a view to securing standards and to meet the needs of contemporary learners, a leadership challenge was to encourage children to self-direct their learning. Consequently, research pertaining to the views of children is considered and the implications for practice and further research explored.

The curriculum guiding practice at the outset of this research was one which was received; many staff within the school had worked with a curriculum package which externally prescribed what was taught and how it ought to be delivered. The issues that emerge as a possible consequence of the external context in which teachers operate are highlighted with a view to informing leadership practice. In contrast to the 'packaged curriculum' approach, notions of the curriculum which suggest an alternative method are considered as a route to informing practice. Reviewing the literature linked to curriculum development identifies a purpose for this research beyond the internal context of the school to one which recognises the need for children to experience a curriculum that prepares them for adult life in the twenty first century.

This research explores the issues presented for leadership in managing the change process when leading staff who have become familiar with a prescribed approach to the curriculum and associated practice. The literatures that provide an insight into understanding the change process are therefore considered and will inform the discussion of this research in the final chapter. This research is ultimately about contributing to knowledge of leadership. Therefore, focused on instructional leadership, the literature review considers what previous research has contributed to our understanding of instructional leadership and identifies a gap in our current knowledge that this research can contribute to our

understanding of leading curriculum change. The literature pertaining to instructional leadership will inform the discussion around the development of leadership knowledge that has emanated from this research.

Introduction

"We should look at what the main school workforce think; those who so often get ignored – the children. They work hard, often in quite crowded and uncomfortable conditions with no pay and little control over what they do. They often have to ask permission to move or to go to the toilet and only in the last few years have they been allowed to have something to drink during their working hours. Most of them work from 9.00am to about 3.15pm, with time for one or two short breaks and a lunch-time of up to one hour. Others start at 8.00am and finish at 6.00pm." (Pat Hughes, 2010, p9).

It is usual for works pertaining to the practice of leadership to begin with a review of the relevant literature on leadership. As this research into leadership action is, in part, informed by the views of children, the discussion begins by focusing upon what research in this area has contributed to our knowledge. Hughes (2010) powerfully indicates, conditions for children within schools can be quite challenging; routines and procedures often continue because historical practices remain unchallenged. Literatures pertaining to Pupil Voice are explored and the implications that this has for practice are considered. Leadership is highly influential in determining learning contexts and experiences for children (Leithwood et al, 2006). Despite this, as is evident from surveying the relevant literature, very little leadership theory actually emanates from, or even takes account of, the views children as the impetus for practice.

Exploring some of the literature pertaining to the views of children and pupil voice, the notion that consulting with children can have a positive effect on their wellbeing is explored. The idea that this can contribute to higher standards of attainment is also considered. Issues relating to the curriculum are considered and how it has evolved into what most children in Britain recognise today. There is a recognition among some commentators that there is a need to move beyond current conceptions of the curriculum to ones which adequately prepare children for the twenty first century; conceptions which embrace creative learning. Particular attention is paid to social pedagogic principles because it is in a classroom space that endorses these principles where children say that they feel most safe and most able to learn. It is suggested that modern children require a curriculum and pedagogy that attend to their cognitive, social and emotional selves. Inquiry learning is considered as one possible model for delivering all of the necessary components of twenty first century learning.

Finally, leadership is explored and how attending to the social and emotional ramifications associated with change is a necessary component of leadership practice. It is acknowledged that educational change should be about bringing improvements to instructional practices. The way in which instructional leadership has been enriched by collegial conceptions, to incorporate relational concerns, has been addressed. The dichotomy between instructional leadership practice, with high achievement as a central aim, and those which are traditionally conceived as pedagogic is also considered. As this research is focussed upon the improvement of professional practice through leadership action, the omission of social pedagogic concerns in instructional conceptions of leadership is presented as problematic.

What are children trying to tell us?

Drawing attention to the work of Lady Plowden commenting on 'Children and their Primary Schools' in 1967, Menter (2013) reminds us that this influential report, while demonstrating lots of interest in basic skills and curriculum subjects, also acknowledge that 'At the heart of the primary school lies the child…' Perhaps for the first time, primary school education was acknowledged as being distinctive phase and element in education. Since this time, there has been an attempt to strike a balance between parental responsibility, as opposed to parental rights. Attention has been given to children's right to express a view on matters pertaining to their lives (Monro, 1999). The 'Children Act for England and Wales' (1989) outlined a set of principles that acknowledge that children have a right to care and protection, to be consulted, information made available to them so that they can make informed decisions, to challenge decisions on their behalf and to have a voice in matters that affect them. There are now many more voices joining those of the child "The voices now belong to politicians, parents, the media, economists, in addition to the child and the teacher" (McLaughlin et al, 1999, p97). Those who want a voice about children's education, seems to have significantly increased since the inception of the Children's Act (1989). These can often be in conflict and can distract from the prominence of actually hearing what children want.

"Students need to leave school with dreams for the future, high aspirations and goals for themselves and society: young men and women who will contribute to active citizenship, community renewal and economic regeneration." (Leo, 2007, p8). It is in community interests that all factions of society contribute to this. Failing to engage many young people in the educative process (or only those from sectors of society that have the cultural capital to succeed) renders it likely that some young people will develop into citizens who will drain rather than regenerate communities. Young people need to engage with the aspirations that

educational systems have for them. If they do not engage, is likely that efforts to afford them educational success will be futile.

From conducting semi-structured interviews with 160 pupils aged between aged six and nine, research has shown that children can be strongly aware of hierarchy within schools. Despite being the "..raison d'etre of schools but rarely central to the interests of those responsible for reform." (Cullingford, 1997, p50); the children did not actually see themselves as the central focus of schooling and identified themselves as trying to please their teachers. Social networks, within and outside school, were also identified as very important; school were seen as a place where children tested social relationships and associations between the demands of children in the classroom and the pressures associated with social relationships were also identified. Cullingford (1997) also noted that physical and mental security was extremely important to the children both among themselves and with their teachers. The tensions existing between formal and informal systems of schooling were evident in the children's attitudes to their work and in their understanding of the curriculum. Accepting that the teacher is a source of knowledge and control, it is further reported that children are very clear about what they look for in good teaching Cullingford (1997). As outlined in chapter five, and borne out by the voice of children in this research, over fifteen years later, modern children are saying similar things. The issues that children consider to be important do not seem to have altered considerably in the twenty first century to those concerns of the young participants in Cullingford's (1997) research. The statement made in the late 1990s is that, despite being given a voice, "those who listen to them are not being listened to by those who have the power to act" (Cullingford, 1997, p67). If leadership is about effecting positive change in the interests of children, the degree to which children are allowed to shape this process is significant for practice.

Research with young people learning in contexts where their teachers purposefully elected to avoid practice associated with ability labelling, or fixed ability, are able to identify their capacity to make choices and engage or disengage with the learning process. Young people demonstrate a preference for teachers who do not object to how many questions learners present them with; the idea of responding to these until children reach a level of understanding is favoured – teachers who explore alternative routes to understanding. Young people recognise that learning does not just happen from listening but requires time to make sense of ideas; they express a preference for a teaching style which recognises this. The self- perception of learners as being good at something largely determines their confidence but can be influenced by teachers; feeling relaxed and supported heightens a sense of confidence. The ability to choose tasks and approaches that are comfortable impacts positively

on confidence as does the young person's mood. This in turn determines their capacity to concentrate. Young people are aware when they are being empowered to make suggestions and identify this as a measure of trust. They recognise themselves as part of a community and identify a sense of responsibility in regard to this. When empowered to make choices that they may not have initially chosen for themselves, young people are often surprised by their own capability. (Heart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, 2004). The message from research therefore suggests that young people are very astute and aware if given the opportunity to express this.

More sophisticated methods for analysing determinants for children's performance provide useful information about the differential outcomes of schooling for different groups. Ofsted have identified social, physical, economic and ethnic factors to highlight children who may be vulnerable to under achievement. Removing the onus of potential barriers to learning away from the child, Hughes (2010) broadens the definition to include barriers to learning that can be the result of schools themselves and their place in society. As well as those barriers commonly identified by Ofsted as vulnerable groups, she includes those which have emanated from pupil voice research which include: how the curriculum is organised, limitations in resourcing, an unsupportive learning ethos, distractions from other children and a lack of personal readiness to focus and learn. The past ten years in particular have seen a notable increase in attention towards children's wellbeing in relation to academic performance. This was clearly evident in the New Labour Government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Wellbeing is a term now widely used and does encompass medical and psychiatric health but it also includes children's attitudes, dispositions, self - esteem and a child's frame of mind (Gray et al, 2011). School experience can either support or impair wellbeing. Knoll & Patt (2003, p29) remind us "The habits of mind of young people and their readiness to learn can be strongly shaped by increasing their social-emotional skill level." Inevitably, different governments will have diverse perspectives and wellbeing concerns are likely to gain or wane in popularity accordingly. Hence, regard for this within the educational sphere may or may not be mandated. The need for Ofsted to identify vulnerable groups and, as suggested by the following research, if practitioners relinquish the responsibility of attending to children's wellbeing, children simply will not 'deliver' if they are not, for whatever reason, able to learn and thus 'perform'.

A child's wellbeing and academic performance has not been extensively researched in primary education thus there is very little information that can contribute our understanding of this. However, research allows the tentative suggestion that every aspect of a child's experience will have an impact on their

wellbeing. The school culture and ethos 'for learning' - the relationships that are formed between children and their teacher and the social and emotional dimensions of learning, (Bragg & Manchester, 2011) are key to determining the child's approach to school. Commenting on adolescent learners, Gray et al (2011, p2), summarising the work of Pope (2009) note that "Good experiences of school were associated with having 'good teachers' who were kind and supportive,' 'passionate about their subjects' and who made lessons 'interesting and fun'. Young people like to be able to 'direct their own learning' and to 'learning by doing rather than just listening'." There is a connection between the relationships that children have with each other, their teachers and the child's sense of emotional wellbeing (Weare & Gray, 2003). Children's perceptions of how 'good' they perceive their teachers to be tend to be informed by how the teachers treat them rather than the actual quality of instruction (Rudduck & Flutter, 2004). From surveying the evidence of research, the aspect of relationships deemed to be important for young people generally relates to 'a sense of respect as a person and a sense of agency within the relationship' (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010, p96). As well as teacher-pupil relationship, pupil-pupil relationships also enter into the dynamic because they impact on young peoples' sense of belonging and perceived value and ultimately impact on a pupils' sense of wellbeing and academic outcomes. In this respect, schools need to create contexts in which children can sustain meaningful relationships (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010).

As well as the conditions 'for learning', the school's ethos 'as learning' referring to school structures, organisation, and how these operate, will deliver implicit messages to children about the nature of society, children's future expectations, capacity to interact, to judge and their place as a citizen within it (Bragg & Manchester, 2011). According to Burke and Grosvenor (2003), modern children in England are insightful about how rigidly learning is organised for them and can articulate why this may not be of benefit to them or society in the future. The following quote from the authors, a synthesis of their voice research with children, wonderfully captures the voice of children when relating their views.

"They describe new forms of organising knowledge around interdisciplinary thematic terrains or dimensions. Questioning the division of learners according to age and ability and the division of teachers according to specialism, they ask for a curriculum driven by curiosity, adventure and collective endeavour. They want to learn in response to a need to know and understand, both for themselves and for their communities and the wider world. Knowledge and skills acquired in school should be immediately useful and applied, thus reinforcing and contributing to society. School efficiency should be replaced by education for fulfilment."

Burke and Grosvenor (2003, p58). From the perspective of children, it is so simple really. Perhaps this should be the starting point for the development of every curriculum across the country?

In reference to peoples' lasting memories of school, a pertinent point made by Bragg and Manchester (2011, p7) is "What endures, however, and often retains its intensity across decades in somatically re-experienced pain, pleasure, embarrassment and humiliation, is *how it made them feel*." It seems therefore that leadership, if it really is about improvement (Leithwood et al, 2006), ought to take account of what children are telling us through the research that we undertake with them. There seems to be a need to integrate this into our everyday practice of working with children so that it is possible to capture their views as they evolve. Research informs us that children are telling us that we must necessarily attend to the cognitive, social and emotional aspects of learning – each are not mutually exclusive. The relationships that children form within school matter, as to why, "The short answer is that they can affect academic outcomes as well as emotional wellbeing." (Gray et al, 2011, p25). The implication for practice is that the curriculum and pedagogy must therefore accommodate this. In order to respond to children there must necessarily be mechanisms in place to capture their views.

Pupil Voice

An area of research that has made a significant contribution to an understanding of children's views and championed the rights of children to participate in the direction that their education takes is 'Pupil Voice'. Work in this area originally stemmed from concerns that young people were being denied the right to develop appropriate measures of responsibility, and in turn shape their learning, or express their levels of maturity within a school context (Rudduck et al, 1996). A prolific proponent of this, Jean Rudduck (2004) maintains that we cannot tenably claim that schooling is for the benefit of children and young people unless we engage them in the process and provide them with an opportunity to contribute their views. Criticism is directed towards educational organisations because they have retained out dated structures and systems that have not responded to the changes that are evident in the lives of children over the past hundred years (Rudduck & Flutter, 2004); structures that have demonstrated a fear of challenging the power differential which place adults in a superior position to the child (Rudduck & Flutter 2000). There is a need for a transformation within educational systems in order to preserve the rights of children but even today, perhaps schools have yet to develop the competencies and culture to redefine themselves (Burke, 2006).

Perhaps as an attempt to bring teaching and learning to the forefront of pupil consultative practices or a measure of how ideas evolve, the principles underpinning 'Pupil Voice' have sometimes been presented under the guise of 'Learner Voice'. However, this term has come under criticism as it depicts children as the only learners within the school and negates against a learning organisation where adults must necessarily be active participants in the learning process (Bragg & Manchester, 2011). Conceivably, a reflection of a secondary school model, and the vocabulary used across different nations, the term 'Student Voice' is also utilised. Rather than confuse the debate with semantics, for this discussion it is accepted that all terms essentially embody the principles and values envisaged within 'Pupil Voice'.

There are two discrete stands of pupil voice. The first, consultation with pupils, involves holding council with children or conferencing with them. A second strand is pupil participation which is suggested to be concerned with engaging children in democratic processes and active citizenship which allow pupils to actively participate in shaping their educational experience (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Proponents of pupil voice suggest that consultative processes create an opportunity for schools to gain an insight into views of pupils with a view to improvements in teaching and learning (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2001; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; MacBeath et al, 2003). A major strength associated with pupil consultation is *suggested to be its capacity to redefine the existing power relationships between* pupils and teachers which tend to locate children as passive recipients in the educative process. Pupil voice has the capacity to elevate children so that learning becomes a joint venture between them and their teacher (Fielding, 2007). Activities linked to pupil voice are also thought to provide pupils with an opportunity to play an active role in their education through schools becoming more responsive and attentive to their views (Hargreaves, 2004). In schools, the form of consultation with pupils that seems to most widely represent pupil voice is the presence of a school council.

The 2005 White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* makes specific reference to school councils as evidence of a commitment to involving children in decision making processes. Findings from research indicates that nearly 95% of schools in England and Wales operate a school council and that these are positively received by teachers, with 62% feeling that school councils should be mandatory and 45% of teachers suggesting that children should be involved in the appointment of staff. There is a wide variety of how pupil representatives are selected to serve on the councils but there is a clear rationale for providing provision for pupil voice. The majority of councils address issues linked to children's environment and facilities but very few involve children in decisions about teaching and learning (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). Other research suggests

that teachers and schools consult pupils for reasons such as: generalised school issues; focused views on groups where there are concerns, as part of systematic monitoring, to support individual learners, in preparation for inspection and to promote democracy (Research briefing, 2003).

What the evidence from research does indicate is that the messages being delivered by proponents of pupil voice have been heard by policy makers and cascaded to schools, many of whom are embracing it. As the popularity of pupil consultation grows, there may be a danger that the organisational concerns and process of school councils become the preoccupation, as is the case in many bureaucratic structures, rather than the prime concern of airing children's views (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006). Perhaps it is as Rudduck and Flutter (2000) maintain; school councils may only merely scratch the surface of the pupil voice agenda and are not necessarily the most effective means of providing constructive consultation between pupils and their teachers. It is also possible privilege the voice of some pupils over others as noted by Fielding & Rudduck (2002).

Research demonstrates that consulting children has a positive impact on their attendance, levels of motivation, their attitude to school and learning and their overall levels of motivation. Due to alterations in teacher's perceptions of pupils, enhanced pedagogic practices have also been noted (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). Consulting with pupils on matters that concern them is also suggested to have a positive impact on children's sense of identity as a learner and strengthens their commitment to learning (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). It is also suggested that consulting with pupils also contributes to their feeling of 'school connectedness' – feelings of engagement and belonging, and pupils' sense of wellbeing (Gray et al, 2011). There is strong evidence to suggest that pupil consultation is not only morally sound, it facilitates one of the main objectives of education, to improve standards for children. However, it is important to recognise, as Pedder & McIntyre (2006) remind us, that consulting with pupils does not necessarily constitute a response in the form of action. It is, of course, possible to survey the views of children without doing anything in response to their views despite the importance of engaging children in active participation so that they can make decisions that subsequently results in action (Fielding, 2001).

The Education Act (2002) requires schools to take account of any recommendations regarding the consultation of pupils given by the secretary of state; this was extended further by *The Education and Skills Act* (2008) which denotes, that taking account of age, governing bodies must consider relevant views of pupils when making certain decisions. In 2004 the DFES published a five year strategy which aimed to secure the voice of children across all phases of

learning as a vehicle for reform. A reference point for pupils to exercise their rights is evident in the DFES publication: *Working together: Giving Children and Young People a Say* (2003). The National Youth Agency also provided a frame of seven standards which enabled schools to assess their practice linked to pupil participation. These standards essentially considered how children were listened to, subsequent change as a result of this and how well children could talk about their involvement in decisions. This was shortly followed by the mandatory school self -evaluation framework (SEF) which contained a section which required all state schools to evaluate their work in response to children's views. Action like this indicates that the importance of consulting pupils is being attended to at a national level. What is less clear is the authenticity and rationale for this consultation.

As Cabinet Minister of Communities and Local Government, David Milliband (2004, p24) commenting on pupil voice within the personalised learning agenda states "Personalised learning is not a return to child-centred theories; it is not about separating pupils to learn on their own; it is not the abandonment of a national curriculum and it is not a license to let pupils coast on their own preferred pace of learning. The rationale for personalised learning is clear; it is to raise standards by focusing teaching and learning on the aptitudes and interests of pupils."

The drive towards pupil consultation has inevitably received a mixed response that has been captured by the media over the years. Supporters of pupil voice have picked up on plethora the research that suggests that it can have a positive impact on learning and behaviour. Others have been less impressed, such as Professor Hayes from Derby University who is reported as saying "Everywhere I go the clearest sign of the rejection of adult authority is listening to learner, student, pupil [or] infant voice. Anybody's voice but the voice of adults," he said "I love debating with pupils such as students and getting them to research but basically they know nothing." (The Telegraph, January, 2010). It is likely that the whole context of the argument was omitted here for the sake of reporter sensationalism and Hayes was addressing concerns about the need for adults to feel that they can act with authority when required. Additionally, possible abuses of pupil voice have been claimed with NASUWT representative, Chris Keates, reported as saying "Many of the reports from members make distressing and disturbing reading." (The Telegraph, April, 2010). What this does illustrate is the importance of developing a culture that supports pupil voice, both at a national and local level; whether it is envisaged as 'pupil' 'student' or 'learner' voice. Unless the organisational and cultural conditions that perpetuate the power differential between children and adults are addressed, the true essence of pupil voice will always be difficult to deliver (Fielding, 2004). If professionals

feel that an initiative is forced upon them without any prior preparation and appropriate consultation, usually caring and compassionate teachers and union representatives may well develop negative and resistant patterns. This may not necessarily be anything to do with their views of the children, rather what those in authority may do with the pupil voice agenda. As John Dunford, the then general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, is reported by BBC News (April, 2010) commenting on the notion that schools may be legally forced to consult with pupils "This is crazy" he said, "I am a strong supporter of pupil voice, but schools are increasingly consulting pupils because they think it is the right thing, not because Government tells them to. I am annoyed and furious that yet another in this continual stream of legal end educational duties is being placed on schools. They all bring unintended consequences."

Pupil voice was conceived to engage pupils in democratic processes and to enhance their identity and self -perception as learners (Fielding, 2001; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004), it was not originally envisioned to help meet outcomes required for the standards agenda or to be used as a tool to secure accountability. Despite this, *The Education and Skills Act* (2008), under the guise of 'Student Voice' compelled schools to develop practices that engaged students in consultative processes in order to fulfil accountability measures (Bahou, 2011). Additionally, as Cook-Sather (2006, p12) argues "In England, where student voice efforts are, arguably, most widely institutionalised because they are mandated by the government, the inspection process of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) takes account of what students say but then sometimes uses this evidence to criticise (or praise) teachers. In addition, Ofsted has been known to exhort students to 'face up to their responsibilities', alongside teachers, to improve their schools." The practice of using pupil voice decisions against the pupils is also noted by Cook-Sather (2006) where negative aspects of developments within of the voice agenda are noted. Although the views of pupils are now sought more urgently than before, in some respects "Student voice is sought primarily through insistent imperatives of accountability rather than enduring commitments to democratic agency." (Fielding, 2011, p123). Opposed to 'high performance' approaches to pupil voice which are suggested to only serve the pursuit of organisational performance Fielding & McGregor (2005) argue that pupils voice, which operates in a 'person centred' mode, will often produce positive outcomes but are not constituted or constrained by measurable results. There is a 'doubled edged sword' to having pupil voice mandated by the Government. On the one hand it does set the expectation for schools to consult with pupils and raise the profile of consultative practices. On the other hand, using it as a form of control to exercise authority over pupil and their teachers is an unfortunate development and does not reflect the spirit of pupil voice.

An important message for practice is the recognition that hearing what children really have to say about their experience of school inevitably evokes a measure of anxiety for those responsible for teaching them. It can be very difficult to hear things that we do not wish to hear (Bragg, 2001). Even when pupils' views are deemed to be constructive and insightful, the response of teachers differs. Some teachers will reflect on practice and in response to children's views; other will initially alter their approach but will return to less engaging practices due to the perceived demands of the curriculum. Those who feel threatened by the views of learners will resist change or challenge to their practice and the schools procedures (McIntyre et al, 2005). Initiatives linked to pupil voice may also be perceived as another form of criticism by teachers (MacBeath et al, 2003) or used inappropriately to advance the interest of particular management groups or to support the agenda of some adults within a school (NASUWT, 2013). There are numerous insecurities that still exist among teachers and a fear of allowing children to voice their judgements of the quality of instruction that they receive (Davies, 2008). However, it is suggested that only in the early stages of developing institutional frameworks for pupil consultation teacher uncertainties and anxieties are most prominent (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006). The message for leadership is to create the conditions – the culture which expects children to speak the truth as they see it and support the possible ramifications that may be associated with this. It is important that leadership does not underestimate the challenges involved in changing the culture of schools. To oversimplify the issues may lead to tokenistic gestures or manipulation of pupils (Thomson & Gunter, 2005).

Writing three years into the life, of what is now, the National College for Teaching and Leadership, David Jackson the Director for Networked Learning Group commends the willingness of leadership thinking to embrace pupil voice. There is a propensity for the National College to pay close attention to pupil voice activities that are associated with 'high performance approaches' (Fielding & McGregor, 2005) but nevertheless Jackson's summary is a useful one. He provides six reasons why pupil voice strategies make sense. They promote educational values, community values, the rights of pupils, encourage social responsibility, the legitimacy of pupil's perspective and promote the possibility that we can transform learning because of the engagement of those who matter the most. Jackson's clear analysis is untarnished by political concerns focused solely on standards to the detriment of the principle that should underpin pupil voice as it does not negate the rights of the child.

To give children a voice in important decisions that affect them and to preserve their right, it can be argued that schools should use the views of children to help to determine the school's curriculum structure, even if this is partial, and to

more directly define the practices associated with teaching and learning. Julia's Flutter's (2000a) research agenda, surveying the views of primary age pupils' with regard to writing, is a good example of how voice can be effectively utilised to build new imaginative and motivating approaches in the classroom. Additionally, research demonstrates that pupils value a degree of autonomy and the opportunity to engage in the decision making process (Gray et al, 2011). There is extensive work being undertaken with regard to the consultation of pupils, both nationally and internationally, but much of it is being driven by the requirements of a standards agenda or what has been referred to as "the imperatives of neo-liberalist forms of global capitalism." (Fielding, 2010, p3). The kind of work that begins with the child and works outwards to define policy and practice does not appear to be happening to the degree to which it might; or certainly it is not becoming embedded in educative practice which still tends to favour a 'top down model' where school's receive the curriculum and deliver it to children. It seems that we may be surveying pupils' voices with regard to how they feel about the way that their teacher delivers the predetermined curriculum (Pedder & McIntyre, 2006); or, as mandated, consulting them prior to any changes in the curriculum (Education & Skills Act, 2008) but there is little opportunity to actually define the curriculum in the first instance. There may be some choice about how teachers deliver learning opportunities but no priority to what is actually presented to learners to stimulate and engage their interest.

Practitioner research presents an ideal vehicle for gaining an insight into ways in which we can enhance teaching and learning through pupil voice activities. As Morgan (2009) concluded from research linked to pupil consultation in the secondary classroom, "Consultation offers a way for teachers and pupils to engage with each other in dialogue and develop dynamic partnerships which pave the way for effective teaching and learning." (Morgan, 2009, p464). However, the contextual conditions within which this occurs can promote or constrain the consultative process and capacity for teachers to respond. In view of this, Morgan (2009) proposes strong support from policy makers and leaders at the school level to facilitate classroom linked pupil voice initiatives.

A synthesis of the research pertaining to the views of children suggests that there are many positive benefits to consulting with them in the interests of their wellbeing and academic performance. It is also evident from the research that relationships within school matter to children. There are further implications for practice as to how pupil voice initiatives are introduced to adults from both an external context and the internal management of this. There is a gap in research that explores the development of a curriculum and practice for teaching and learning that emanates directly from the voice and responses of the children; an approach that utilises a 'person centred' approach (Fielding, 2010). This research

explores how children's views and responses might be used to develop a curriculum and the practice of instruction associated with this. It also investigates the leadership action required to shape the cultural conditions necessary to enable this process.

Pedagogy and the Curriculum

Originating from ancient Greek language, the term pedagogue literally means to lead a child to school. In Roman times, the 'pedagogus' was an educated slave, often Greek in origin, whose responsibility it was to serve and guide young learners. Despite the long hours often dedicated to the job (thus rendering the pay as seemingly relatively low), today's pedagogues (or teachers as it the preferred term in modern England) assume their role via their free will and are part of a profession whose responsibility it is to educate children and young people. The term pedagogue tends not to be widely used in Britain when referring to, what we understand to be, teachers. Perhaps more widely used in other regions of Europe where discussion around education is more likely to also embrace philosophies of evaluation and the purpose of schooling (Lingard, 2013). An interesting distinction between teacher and pedagogue is made by Baumfield (2013, p47) suggesting that "The difference between teaching and pedagogy is one of scope as teaching describes the actions taken whilst pedagogy focus not only on the actions but also the ideas and values of education that need to be considered." As is evident throughout the following chapters, discussion and analysis concerning the role of the teacher is not merely confined to their capacity to instruct children. It is placed within the context of pupil ownership of the learning process and encompasses: engendering a passion and motivation for learning, pupil choice, collaboration and preparation for 'a good life' (Gallagher and Wyse, 2013). If the extensive and complex remit of a teacher's role is not recognised, then we fail to acknowledge their professionalism (Baumfield, 2013). Robin Alexander (2008, p75) provides a concise account of the connection between the teacher and pedagogy in his suggestion that "Teaching is a practical and observable act. Pedagogy encompasses that act to together with purpose, values, ideas, assumptions, theories and beliefs that inform, shape and seek to justify it". This understanding is one that is accepted for the purpose of this discussion.

As outlined in chapter one, teachers and pupils had a greater amount of control over the curriculum pre 1988 when the Educational Reform Act legislated for the introduction of a National Curriculum. The difficulty with high stakes testing is that it can shape pedagogy and potentially reduce the intellectual demand required for the development of this, thus reducing the potential impact that a teacher can make (Lingard, 2013). As Jeffrey (1999, p83) argued over a decade

ago “The social agenda of welfare professionalism is being replaced by the economic agenda of technical and entrepreneurial professionalism.”

The expansion of state education in Britain over the past sixty years has aligned with the recovery of industry following the Second World War. There is now a propensity for Western governments to view education in a similar manner to any other investment. Allen & Ainley (2007, p15) describe this as “Like increases in the stock of physical capital such as plant and machinery, investment in education represented increases in the stock of ‘human capital’. Therefore the benefits of more education to both the individual and society were indisputable”. A globalised economy has resulted in educational policy becoming more centralised with less credence paid to educators. Lingard (2013, p2) referring to what he terms the ‘message systems’ of the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation maintains that “My stance is that we need more teacher involvement in policy production and more trust placed in teachers as professionals, with strong systemic commitment to and support of their on-going professional development and proper salary structures”. Similarly, Elliot (2001) argues a need for greater teacher scope in organising curriculum content to avoid a repeat of early conceptions of the National Curriculum for England and Wales which was suggested to neglect the inner being and social development of pupils. Favouring a process curriculum model, Elliot (2001) further argues that any new curriculum needs to meet the challenge of a changing society and the demands placed upon the individuals within it. In view of this, a 21st century curriculum needs to acknowledge the decline of traditional social ties and bonds and the lack of continuity in social relationships, recognise complex social and economic connections and recognise how technological advancements influence society and the nature of knowledge.

Our most current dominant framework for teaching and learning may well be inadequate for responding to the rapidly changing world that is a reality for today’s children. There is a definite need to move beyond conceptions of the curriculum simply in terms of what it taught. Perhaps in creating a real and necessary purpose for a curriculum, school leaders need to work from their vision outwards (Burton et al, 2001). Currently, however, leaders are often required to work backwards from prescribed frameworks of the curriculum and apply this to their school. Further to this, Burton et al (2001, p21) add “To an extent any model of the curriculum as it exists in the educational establishment, will be a compromise between these various pressures, a reflection of reality and the vision that is being worked towards.”

In discussing future schools, organisations which must accommodate global changes, Beare (2001) talks about the need to find an extended network

metaphor to describe how learning should be organised for children within schools. Tracing its historical origins which are preserved through language, Beare (2001) disentangles the metaphor of the curriculum as climbing a stair where every learner is an athlete running around the same track. A grade is a step, a degree a rung up a ladder, a course is to run and a curriculum is a small running track. The implication of curriculum, and the model in current use, is therefore a linear one where learning is an isolated activity. For Beare (2001), a future school is one in which learning is necessarily nodular, where pupils engage in chunks of learning that are not necessarily always associated with age. In this scenario there is some unitizing of the curriculum but a high degree of overlap across most disciplines. Many practitioners, with a working knowledge of primary age children, are likely to recognise this as the child's view of the world. It does seem that there is a failure to recognise a potential leverage in educating children by not harnessing this aptitude and persisting with an entirely subject based curriculum.

Discussing practice in relation to primary and secondary schooling, Gray et al (2011) challenge the rhetoric view that primary schools have been a place of innovation and excitement for learners over the past forty years in contrast to secondary schools which are depicted as dull and formal. It is argued that that primary schools can often be places where teaching "..is mainly interrogative and directive in nature" (Gray et al, 2011 p47). Perhaps what is most concerning about persisting with an out dated curriculum is the failure to respond to the knowledge that is gained from pupil voice research. Children are experiencing the 'here and now' and are subject to global changes, as previously discussed. They are also tomorrow's adults and must find their place in the technologized world where knowledge quickly fades, to be replaced by something new; rapid change is an inevitable part of life. Professional practice informs me that children are aware of the interconnected nature of the world, they are acutely sensitive to communication and how channels and paths are interconnected. In view of this, children are likely to have a propensity to think in a more holistic way to solve problems and yet we ask them to compartmentalise their thinking into discrete areas.

Menter (2013, p25) points out "We should not see the primary curriculum as being fixed, but rather as the present manifestation of a continuously evolving debate about what it is that younger children should be learning, in terms of knowledge and concepts, skills and dispositions." In view of the rapid changes brought about by technology, the implication for practice is that there is a need for a curriculum that evolves; one which is able to move with children and the ever changing contexts in which they exist. In practice, there is a need to afford more time to consider the actual aims of a primary school curriculum. When

standards are the only agenda, learning can be fragmented and consist of disparate activities (Mortimore et al, 1998). Caution needs to be exercised against an excessive focus on standards alone as "…teachers will feel that, since they are judged by results, outcomes alone justify the means." (Elliot, 2001, p37). School effectiveness has to be more than simply maximizing academic achievement and must necessarily embrace a children's love of learning, their self -esteem, personal development, life skills independent thinking and how to learn (Hextall & Mahoney, 1998). If children are kept at the heart of the primary school and the curriculum then the aims of the curriculum become more clearly defined and meaningful to those at the centre of the educative process. If pupils ownership was to become a central feature of the curriculum then the curriculum aims might include: engendering a passion for learning, choice over learning, developing an understanding of human activity, power relations and our future sustainability, how to collaborate and how to prepare for a 'good life' (Gallagher and Wyse, 2013).

Presenting a learner centred conception of the curriculum, Silcock and Brundrett, (2001, p42) suggest "It is not the nature of a topic or interdisciplinary study which makes it learner centred, it is the way the topic is treated". This is in contrast to conceptions of the curriculum where learning is packaged and 'delivered' to the child. There is a distinct lack of attention given to pedagogy in the curriculum that is prescribed for the majority of young children currently being educated in England and Wales. Alexander (2008, p69) addressing the question 'why no pedagogy' critically comments "Under our now highly centralised and interventionist education system those who have the greatest power to prescribe pedagogy seems to display the poorest understanding of it, and the discourse becomes mired in the habitual bombast, mendacity and spin of policy speak. The pedagogy of principle has yet to be rescued from the pedagogy of pragmatism and compliance." There needs to be an incentive for teachers to consider the wider remit of their role, a role which is responsible creating a culture and shaping the child's learning environment to harness that which is positive and reduce or remove that which is not (Briggs, 2001). This research is focused on a leadership journey in attempting to realise this objective.

Focused on a discussion around where care and education meet, Cameron and Moss (2011) offer a concise account of the principles that should be evident in a pedagogic setting include: treating the child as a whole person so that their overall development is supported with a clear knowledge of the child's rights, the practitioner identifies themselves as in a professional relationship with the whole child which is supported by training, hierarchy is reduced as adults and children are seen to occupy the same space, children lives in groups are

identified as important and communication, team work and community are valued in contributing to the child's development. Importantly, reflection on practice in terms of theoretical and self- knowledge is a key to managing challenges that may be encountered. As teachers and leaders of learning, this understanding seems to be vital. This notion presents a challenge to the idea of compartmentalising aspects of learning. One might also argue it challenges the idea of packaging a curriculum to children in a way that is manageable for practitioners to 'deliver, assess and in a format that measures accountability. It opposes the idea children see the world through this lens and the notion that cannot compartmentalise the holistic nature of learning in children's minds. An implication for practice is whether or not children are able to separate the content of the curriculum from the context in which it is introduced, how it is presented to them, supported and developed. Can children separate curriculum content from the person who seeks to engage them in learning – the teacher, the pedagogue?

The home culture of a child provides the inevitable and natural way of being; some home cultures align more readily with those of a school than others, thus being more advantageous to the child at school (Booker, 2002). There is growing evidence to suggest that parental engagement enhances student achievement (Hattie, 2008) and there is a lot of work that schools can, and should, do to utilize this potential. If the locus of responsibility for pupil attainment is to rest with schools, it is necessary for schools to also consider those children whose parents have limited capacity to support or to impart a value system that mirrors that of the schools. What about those children who do not have this impetus to guide them? It seems to be ineffective to develop practice within schools that is over reliant on parental value systems to provide the impetus for pupil attainment. If this is sustained, vulnerable groups are more likely to underperform. The measure of influence linked to parental expectation and engagement is premised upon the current state of educational systems, where children's voice is largely unheard and, when it is, it is largely to determine how children feel about the pre-determined curriculum and practices that they have had little opportunity to shape. If the curriculum becomes unappealing to young learners and the practice of teaching disengages them, there will be no choice other than to rely upon parents' value system to provide the impetus for achievement. Nothing will change. Children, or rather some children, will engage with schools and learning because their parents want them to do well, others simply will not. A failure to acknowledge and engage children's interests will ensure that the achievement gap will remain the same or even widen. The momentum for learning should be provided by the growth of the person. There is a need to understand the individual through their eyes and how they interact with the

social contexts that they inhabit (Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2011). This needs to be reflected in the curriculum that is built with children and the practices associated with it. This has significant implications for practice and provides a purpose for this research.

Inquiry Learning

"If education is not about making young people more compassionate, more tolerant and better able to collaborate with others, it is nothing. If school don't ensure that moral growth accompanies academic development at every stage, they have failed." (Elliot, 2007, p99)

The literatures thus far highlight the importance for practice of attending to the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions of children's learning experience. In primary education in Britain, there has been a tendency for schools to compartmentalise the curriculum over the past ten years, a likely consequence of the manner in which unitized supporting documents have been rolled out to schools with associated assessment accountabilities. Being overburdened with content, it is very easy to understand why schools might view areas like personal, social and emotional development as 'bolt on' subjects afforded time in the busy week in the shape of a timetabled lesson rather than an integral part of the child's holistic learning experience. In relation to practice, it may also be the case that some areas of learning that are tested are given greater value and priority of time than others to the detriment of some areas of learning. This has led to concerns about a reduction in creative opportunities for children within schools. In response to this, in 2002, The 'Creative Partnerships' was established with the aim of forging partnerships between creative professionals and schools to promote creative learning. Its work is funded by the organisation 'Creativity, Culture and Education' (CCE) intended to promote children's skills and attainment through creative learning opportunities. Exploring the relationship between creative partnerships and school ethos, Bragg & Manchester (2011) propose some key dimensions in the development of an ethos committed to creative partnerships. A creative school ethos is suggested to be *considerate* and stresses care, respect, courtesy, fairness and responsibility. It is also *convivial* because enjoyment and fun are considered to be of prime importance within children's social and interdependent learning experiences. Imagination is central to an integrated curriculum which supports rigor and disciplined work. Schools committed to creativity are also suggested to be *capacious* because room is established to expand learning and chart new territories with an open, fluid perspective. There is also the recognition that the emotions associated with learning require support and that there may be a need to hold uncertainties, incompleteness and fear of failure.

A further study commissioned by the CCE concerns the impact of 'Creative Partnerships' on the wellbeing of children and Young People. This research noted that the main focus of schools creative partnership work was as a route to school improvement rather than as a means of securing pupil engagement and wellbeing in the first instance. Despite this, some participating schools viewed 'Creative Partnership' work as a vehicle for developing creative learning. Researching the complex impact of creative learning on the wellbeing of both primary and secondary pupils, McLellan et al (2012) have, tentatively, identified aspects of Creative Partnership work that have the potential to positively impact on children's wellbeing. Positive effects are dependent upon the process undertaken within schools to develop creativity. If Creative Partnership work is used to target those perceived to be least able and deny the most able creative opportunities, the effects upon wellbeing can be negative. The facets identified as having the potential to positively impact include: interpersonal aspects of life, children's satisfaction with life, children's perceived competence and the existence of negative emotions. As well as impacting on children's wellbeing, Creative Partnership work is also suggested to influence teacher wellbeing through the development of their practice; this may indirectly have an impact upon the wellbeing of children. Leadership attention is required to nurture, support, and ultimately sustain, gains in wellbeing.

Inquiry learning is a potentially creative approach that attends to all three learning needs of the child: cognitive because it relies on deep questioning and a whole array of sophisticated skills to support the learning process; social because it demands a complex range of attitudes and foster collaboration and emotional, because it values the interest and contribution of the child and can facilitate positive engagement. To secure the development of all three, particularly the latter two dimensions, the social and emotional context in which children inquire is paramount. Additionally, as the impetus for inquiry comes directly from the child, an attuned facilitator can enhance the child's learning journey by introducing many creative elements across traditional subject areas.

There is little knowledge of primary school inquiry available to guide practice (Van Deur & Murray-Harvey, 2005). Much of what is available pertains to secondary age or adult students. Nevertheless, there are lessons for practice available in the literatures. Aulls & Shore (2008) suggest that the whole curriculum does not need to be inquiry based as all children, even gifted ones, need to develop specific skills and strategies related to their areas of interest. The goals of inquiry instruction are not solely limited to the academic domain and focused upon the acquisition of traditional knowledge. Lee et al (2004) maintain that guided inquiry is defined as much by the student commitment it brings as an outcome as much as the teaching methods used which may include.

Interactive lecturing, discussion, problem-based learning, case studies, simulations and independent study are also features of inquiry. The strengths of inquiry is that it does facilitate academic learning but from an investigative, active stance rather than as the passive recipient of knowledge. It can also have a positive impact on children's capacity to self- direct their learning (Van Deur & Murray-Harvey, 2005). Additionally, the nature of the academic discipline does not prohibit the use of an inquiry approach (Lee et al, 2004). Achievement, in inquiry, is not necessarily recognised in the form of tests or grades as the motivation for children to engage in inquiry is their own interest or curiosity. In addition to this, inquiry instruction is also about learning to think like an inquirer.

Instruction for inquiry includes specific, and sometimes discrete, teaching but it also considers other dimensions and contexts that are involved in the learning process such as the joint construction of knowledge, the classroom culture, the curriculum as a process and content knowledge shared by children and their teachers. Context dimensions therefore include consideration of: the physical setting, resources and materials, classroom discourse, content curriculum knowledge, academic activities and social and personal activities (Aulls & Shore, 2008). Teachers are suggested to grow into inquiry practice rather than instantaneously transform in to an inquiry practitioner (Lee et al, 2004).

Inquiry learning is not to be confused with a discovery approach. Allus & Shore (2008) make the important point that pupils who do not already hold the content knowledge that is relevant to an academic problem are unlikely to inductively acquire it through a discovery approach. Inquiry is concerned with the activation of prior knowledge in pursuit of new knowledge. Additionally, if a child holds misconceptions in relation to an inquiry problem, they are likely to retain these unless teachers are aware and address these misconceptions. Neither, as Aulls and Shore (2008) confirm, is it appropriate to give children responsibility for their own learning and ask that they self- direct this unless they have the requisite declarative and strategic knowledge to manage this responsibility.

Teaching for inquiry is highly skilful and it does make high demands of the teacher. It is not presumed that children will learn inquiry skills if left entirely to their own devices, these require instruction. Even to initially engage in basic research in response to a curiosity and to move beyond observation, an age and task appropriate sophisticated skill set is required. Inquiry instruction can be teacher directed, guided by a teacher or be entirely pupil centred. This infers varying divisions of responsibility for the learning process shared between the child and the adult facilitating the inquiry process.

Speaking of undergraduate students and inquiry learning, Pond (2004) makes the point that many undergraduate learners new to inquiry are limited in how to conduct research and ways to explore unique perspectives on a given subject. Additionally, many students who have not had educational experiences that lend themselves to inquiry learning can, initially, be resistant to this way of learning due to habitual passivity. It can be argued that this is the experience of many young people who embark on further study; the idea of being asked to think in unfamiliar, more challenging ways is often uncharted territory. If education is about preparing young people for their future, consideration must necessarily be given to the ideas that they should not have to wait until they are a young adult before they get to engage in original thinking. Each phase of a child's learning experience should ideally prepare them for the next. Once habits of mind are developed at an early age, they can be difficult to alter and may inhibit future learning (Pond, 2004). The implication for practice is that is seems to make good sense to retain and utilize children's curiosity.

Guided inquiry learning for undergraduates in an environment which promotes active inquiry learning for the study of science has been shown to develop superior, higher order cognitive skills compared to traditional methods of lecturing and has a positive impact on student's attitudes and perseverance with a course (Oliver-Hoyo & Beichner, 2004). Inquiry learning is also suggested to increase student engagement and participation (Slatta, 2004) and has a positive effect on the quality of student's work and their critical thinking skills (Malinowski, 2004).

Inquiry teaching and learning is suggested to have significant implications for the way in which the physical learning environment is organised and the kind of resources necessary to support the learning process. The way in which computer technology is used to enhance pupils' learning environment requires careful consideration (Rohrbach et al, 2004). Ways of learning that are practically orientated are crucial to problem solving and are as valuable as those inherent within an academic tradition (Davis & Tesar, 2004). This is something that particularly appeals to the interests of primary aged pupils. There is very little that contributes to an understanding of inquiry based learning for British children in the primary phase of schooling. In developing instruction, models of assessment and intervention materials, all emanating from research with primary aged pupils, this research can offer knowledge of effective practice for schools wishing to embark on an inquiry based curriculum and the leadership of this.

In schools which have 'heart and vision' Lantieri (2003) sees schools as places where all individuals are honoured, social justice underpins the work of the

school and collaboration is encouraged, teachers an pupils engage in inquiry, power dynamics help everyone grow and there is time for reflection and space for imagination and creativity. O' Brien et al (2003), maintain that in challenging the ways in which schools operate within the 21st century, requires emotionally intelligent leaders who understand what can be done for children emotionally, socially and academically. The final section of this chapter explores some aspects of leadership which might lend itself in support of this objective.

Some Aspect of Leadership

(1) What is leadership?

There are many conceptions of leadership and a wide debate focused on leadership of organisation far too lengthy to debate here. For the purpose of this discussion, it is accepted that the purpose of leadership is to bring about positive change and the management dimension of this is focused on the creation of consistency and order (Leithwood & Lavine, 2004). Leadership is therefore concerned with setting directions and exercising influence with a goal of improvement; management structures secure the stability of leadership processes (Leithwood et al, 2006).

In tracing the journey through this research in the opening chapter, it was stated that a principal objective was to improve standards for children. It has been acknowledged that achievement for children must necessarily equate with standards that are identified for them by the country in which they are citizens, otherwise they will be prohibited from fully receiving or contributing to their economic context as adults. Many commentators suggest that standards should also embrace the whole child and utilise their creative capacity in order to support the child's overall development and, of course, those elements which are publically measured to define the quality for the education a country offers. Leaders can not only be passionate about the achievement of children but also passionate about care, collaboration, commitment, trust and inclusivity (Day, 2004).

Recognising the importance of the whole child and the whole process of educating them does not negate the prominence of achieving academic excellence. Of course a key component of leadership must therefore be about delivering standards for children and leaders, and school systems should be held accountable for the contribution that they make to children's learning (Elmore, 2000). As previously discussed, leading a school is also about developing the quality of experience that children receive – the quality of the instruction that they encounter on a daily basis. What appears to be crucial in exercising

accountability for children's standards is developing capacity to deliver these. There is a reciprocal relationship between accountability and standards in that if we are giving leaders and teachers responsibility for standards then we have a responsibility to ensure that they have the capacity to deliver these (Elmore, 2007). In seeking to understand leadership and the sway that this can have on the process of positive change, it seems important to unpack the processes which underpin the development of this capacity.

Often leadership is thought of as a set of behaviours or a person with particular traits and some theories of leadership allude to this. While I recognise that interpersonal relationships are crucial in leadership processes, my own professional experience leads me to believe that the success of a school cannot be solely attributed to the talents or charisma of one individual who leads and manages the change process. My stance is informed by the writing of Lambert (1998) who suggests that leadership is about learning together, about constructing meaning and knowledge collaboratively and collectively. It is this understanding that I bring to my conduct as a leader and a researcher. It is also informed by the belief that leadership is about building capacity within an organisation.

Robinson (2006) is very clear about where leadership attention needs to be placed in order to impact on the quality of provision offered to learners. Arguing for a need to redirect research focused on educational leadership to link more specifically with the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and learning, she notes that a school leadership must necessarily focus on teaching and learning. What Robinson (2006) proposes, to some extent, describes the process undertaken to inform leadership practice in this research. It is argued that, what she terms generic leadership research does yield useful knowledge about the processes involved in leadership and the kind of dispositions required to exercise influence – the 'how' of leadership. However, generic leadership research offers us little in terms of 'what' leadership needs to focus upon in order to direct their influence. Robinson (2006) proposes a 'backward mapping logic' which focuses on how teachers are actually making a difference to pupils' achievement and then identifying the conditions that need to be developed within the organisation to increase this positive impact. Although not a deliberate intention from the outset, this research does assimilate into this 'backward mapping model'.

There is a scarceness of empirical evidence regarding the impact of leadership on the core business of schooling (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Exploring the dimensions of leadership centred on daily routines that pertain to teaching and learning offers insight into this area. Developing a new curriculum will inevitably

incur change. In view of this, it is useful to have an understanding of how change can be conceived.

(2) Change

In speaking of the nature of meaningful change and how to effect lasting change with an educational organisation, Michael Fullan (2007, p37) comments

"The real crunch comes in the relationship between these new programs or policies and the thousands of subjective realities embedded in people's individual and organizational contexts and their personal histories. How these subjective realities are addressed or ignored is crucial for whether potential changes become meaningful at the level of the individual use and effectiveness. It is perhaps worth repeating that changes in actual practice along the three dimensions – in materials, teaching approaches, and beliefs, in what people *do and think* – are essential if the intended outcome is to be achieved."

In attempting to develop a new curriculum, one that affords children a greater degree of choice and autonomy, addressing the subjective realities of those involved in the change process, presents a leadership challenge. For Fullan (2007), the less overt alterations need to secure change that are required in teaching style and belief systems present even more of a challenge than those posed by the more visible policy and resources dimensions of the change process.

Citing the work of Marris (1975) focused on 'Loss and Change', Fullan (2007) suggests that change, whether externally imposed or voluntarily undertaken, will involve loss, anxiety and struggle. Consequently, a degree of ambivalence and uncertainty pervades any change process. The implication for practice in leading change denotes that leadership attention is directed toward the subjective and deep meaning of the change. Fullan (2007) further asserts that failure to develop infra structures and processes that engage teachers in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding will only result in superficial change.

Elmore (2007) asserts that the term 'change' has become corrupted in its application to education, certainly in North America. His analysis is relevant to British education, particularly in view of the rate that schools in England have been expected to assimilate new initiatives. It is argued that improvement often requires change and many proponents of change often suggest that schools are resistant to this. For Elmore (2007), this is not the case. Rather, schools are often ill equipped to cope with change and are therefore limited in their capacity to bring about the improvement needed. Change alone will not bring about improvement unless it is linked to improvements in human capacity. It is the

purpose of leadership to bring about improvements in instructional performance and practice (Elmore, 2007).

The intention of this project is to develop a curriculum that provides opportunities for child initiated inquiry and to improve the quality of self-directed learning experience of children so that it has a positive impact on achievement. The research is to inform leadership action to bring about improvements in practice. The literatures suggest that consultation with pupils has positive benefits for their sense of belonging, engagement and academic performance. There is little research that currently contributes to our knowledge of how pupil consultation can be used to enhance leadership. Bringing about improvement, inevitably involves change and caution needs to be exercised in how change is led and managed. Focusing the research on the views of others and classroom practice to, in turn, inform leadership practice, will initiate action linked to setting direction, developing people, redesigning organisational procedures and ways in which the school's instructional programme is managed (Leithwood et al, 2006). Although a number of labels have been used to describe this leadership approach, it essentially embodies those elements which are associated with instructional leadership.

(3) Instructional Leadership

The conception of instructional leadership has its roots in the inspection systems that existed in England, America and Australia as far back as the nineteenth century. In relation to leadership, instructional leadership became prominent in America in the 1970s where the notion that leadership should supervise instruction, with a view to improving the quality of teaching and learning, was promoted. Linked to school effectiveness literature, instructional leadership was suggested to be a reason why some schools performed more effectively than others (Heck et al, 1991). The need for Head Teachers to be trained as instructional leaders was also promoted alongside the recognition that site based management was decreasing leaders' capacity to focus on instructional leadership due to the increasing administrative demands of their role (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992). At this point in its development, instructional leadership tended locate the Head Teacher as the locus of control (Bossert et al, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood et al, 1990), bestowed with the power and authority to effect change, others, such as teachers as agents of change, were largely ignored. In the 1980 to 1980, instructional leaders were depicted as goal oriented, culture builders, who modelled and promoted high expectations for teachers and pupils (Barth, 1990; Bossert et al, 1982; Heck et al, 1990). In America, where it was more prevalent, earlier conceptions of instructional leadership tended to be used by policy makers as a 'hammer' to promote

standards with a 'one size fits all' approach. As schools differ extensively in their needs, Hallinger (2008) is critical of this approach but does note that this era highlighted the importance of the school effectiveness movement, in focusing global attention towards the importance of instructional leadership.

The instructional leadership model proposed by Hallinger & Murphy (1985) is the one which is most espoused by other commentators. This outlined ten instructional leadership functions (framing goals, communicating goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, co-ordinating the curriculum, monitoring pupil progress, protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility and promoting incentives for teaching and learning) which can be categorised into three areas: defining the school's mission, managing the school's instructional programme and promoting a positive learning climate (Leithwood et al, 2006; Hallinger, 2008).

In surveying studies using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) he developed, Hallinger (2009) makes the point that high scores on the scale only indicate leadership activity but are not a measure of the effectiveness of leadership performance. There are studies that focus on whether or not instructional practices do actually make a difference to school effectiveness (albeit it indirectly) but not the leadership process that is undertaken to secure improvement. The kind of leadership action necessary for instructional leadership is clearly not evident in earlier conceptions; this is something that Hallinger (2009b) picks up in his later work on instructional leadership. From surveying the research undertaken over the past twenty five years, Leithwood et al (2006) suggest that instructional leaders can exert an indirect influence on pupil achievement through their action to effect change to school conditions and practice within the classroom. While instructional leaders tend to enact similar basic principles, it is suggested that their action is responsive to their differing school circumstances. In order to fill a gap in our knowledge, this research will explore what these responsive contextual leadership actions might be. Hallinger (2008) acknowledges that the specific actions that leaders may enact to secure, for example, the key feature of focusing on a clear academic mission will be context dependent and appear quite different in accordance with the needs of the setting.

Instructional leadership has enjoyed varying degrees of popularity over the past three decades, interest waning towards the close of the millennium to be replaced by interest in transformational and distributed forms of leadership. In North America, interest in instructional leadership has re-emerged in the twenty first century because, as Hallinger (2009, p2) talking of 'educational standards having turned into a love affair with accountability' puts it, "Principals again find

themselves at the nexus of accountability and school improvement with an increasingly explicit expectation that they will function as instructional leaders." To some extent, the strength of an instructional model has been tarnished by the fact that it has been the favoured model of western governments and used to impose an agenda that has received a very mixed reception from the professional expected to deliver it; as addressed by Southworth (2004). Thankfully, renewed forms of instructional leadership have evolved to encompass a wider conception of leadership beyond that of the Head Teacher or Principle. For example, earlier conceptions of it, placed greater emphasis on the control of teachers rather than its development; a possible consequence of the research context of schools in challenging circumstances from which it was developed (Hallinger, 2008). Perhaps as a consequence of its historical evolution and developments in thinking around leadership, more recent conceptions of instructional leadership have incorporated teacher professionalism and teacher leadership (Blasé and Blasé, 1998; Harris, 2003; Lambert, 2002). The follow discussion outlines how instructional leadership has evolved.

(4) Distributed Leadership – Towards Leadership for Learning

Defining educational management as being concerned with operational practice and leadership as subjective influence, values or vision, in conceptualising educational theory, Bush (2011) suggests that it differs to scientific theory which is challenged when new facts emerge that cannot be explained under the current theory. For Bush (2011), educational theory is more appropriately conceptualised as different ways of seeing a problem, rather than a theory of falsification, with three characteristics: normative, selective and based on observations of practice. Unlike other theories of leadership, interestingly, Bush (2011) does not identify instructional leadership as linking to any management model because it focuses on the direction of influence of teaching and learning as opposed to the nature of the influence process. However, the concept that educational theory is a different way of seeing a problem might help to explain how instructional leadership has historically evolved to accommodate new thinking and ideas about leadership.

Education must necessarily address the persistent differential between the richest and poorest, both at a microcosmic and macrocosmic level. In addressing the kind of education that will be required to meet this challenge, Harris (2008, p8) comments "In the 'brave new' economic world, schools need to harness all the available leadership capacity and capability. This will only be achieved if schools maximize all forms of human, social and intellectual capital. To maximize leadership capacity, schools need to be operating and performing at the level of

the best schools. To achieve this requires a radical shift in leadership practice." For Harris (2008) this shift must necessarily be towards distributed patterns of leadership which she describes as "a form of leadership practice that involves many organisational members. Here organisational influence and decision making is governed by the interaction of individuals, rather than individual direction." (Harris, 2008, p34).

Inherent within the idea of distributing leadership is the notion that leadership must be concerned with moral purpose that cultivates leadership in others (Fullan, 2001), can be exercised at different times in relation to a variety of issues (Bennett & Anderson, 2003) and is not necessarily held by one influential individual but can be distributed among many members of the organisation (Gronn, 2003). Within a collaborative culture, a distributed leadership framework denotes that the role of the leader is to harness and empower leadership in others (Harris and Lambert, 2003). Sustainable structural change is deemed superficial unless it is accompanied by cultural change that distributes responsibility and accountability to all members of the organisation. Some conceptions of distributed leadership are primarily concerned with leadership practices and interactions within an organisation rather than the actions of individuals that are engaged in leadership (Harris, 2008). In relation to this research project, it is this latter feature that is potentially limiting. While such notions of leadership offer a reputable and principled value systems that should, in my view, underpin leadership, they do little to contribute to our knowledge of the kinds of *leadership action* that will actually make a practical difference in learning context where leaders are attempting to actually address the differential between the 'rich and poor'. Fullan (2003) astutely comments that, in more widely disseminating the moral purpose of leadership we need to be careful that we do not lose sight of the reason why it actually works.

The lack of focus on action in distributed models of leadership is thoroughly addressed by Spillane et al (2001). Identifying a need for an in depth understanding of practice, Spillane et al (2001) suggest a need to understand how and why leaders engage in action to affect change. Inherent within the theoretical roots of this conception is the recognition that leadership is enacted within a social context and can be distributed but that attention to individual agency within this distribution needs to be considered. As this perspective is grounded in leadership activity, macro and micro organisational tasks, and how leaders organise their practice around these, are a key concern. The pursuit of a task centred approach, focused on the observable rather than solely espoused daily work of school leaders, is suggested to provide a means of accessing the distribution of leadership. The notion that leadership can be independently enacted but 'stretched over' the work of more than one person is also a feature

of this theory. Separate, but interdependent, leadership practice can contribute to the realisation of shared goals. Artefacts and tools (such as curriculum frameworks, monitoring formats etc.) are considered to be constitutive and defining elements of leadership practice. This is aptly explained as "Leaders do not work directly on the world; their actions in and on the world are mediated by artefacts, tools and structures of various sorts (Spillane et al, 2001, p25). The key focus on the vast area of instruction is suggested to have many facets which are constituted within the complexities of interaction between teachers, pupils and learning materials where the interplay between these elements will collectively determine the quality of learning.

In this conception of leadership, it is the perspective of assuming a distributed view on the analysis of management and leadership that is central rather than the distribution of leadership among members of the organisation. In this respect, leadership is considered to be a set of organisational functions that are dependent on factors such as: context, the task, the capacity within the organisation or the developmental phase of the school. This stance moves beyond persons in formal leadership positions and does attempt to alleviate the criticism of instructional leadership theory being overly focused on a 'top down' strategy which omits the importance of others who effect positive change. For Spillane et al (2004) distributed leadership is considered to be an analytical tool to gain an insight into leadership practice "by offering a set of constructs that can be harnessed to frame diagnoses and inform the design process. In this respect, distributed leadership can serve as both a diagnostic and design tool that offers a lens on leadership practices within and between schools." (Spillane et al, 2004, p32). Harris and Spillane (2008) acknowledge that there is an urgent need to enrich this concept with systematic evidence that is the result of engagement with educational professionals within schools. Spillane and Diamond (2007) are adverse to the idea that a leadership blueprint can be created and maintain that their theory provides an analytical tool to guide research and practice but is not a prescription for patterns of effective distribution. The descriptive nature of Spillane and Diamond's (2007) conception of leadership has been identified as a potential weakness of their model because of the need to acknowledge principles that result in positive outcomes for children. For Timperley (2008, p825) there is a need to identify principles regarding *how* to distribute leadership because, "As a research community, we have a responsibility to both identify powerful analytical tools as Spillane has done, together with identifying principles of how we might use them to further the moral purpose of schooling." Within this study, the voice of the staff and the children will direct leadership action. The development of artefacts and tools needed to facilitate the introduction of a new curriculum will be explored. In this respect, this research will be able to address the gap in leadership knowledge regarding the kinds of

tools and artefacts that are needed to affect change and will contribute to an understanding of the processes that underpin developments.

As thinking around leadership has evolved, instructional leadership has been enriched by collegial conceptions of leadership to create an approach that retains learning at the core but also takes account of the contextual relationships in which learning occurs. A number of terms have been used to label this kind of approach to leadership such as 'educational leadership', most commonly used on Australia Gurr et al (2006) 'learning centred leadership' (Reardon, 2011; Southworth, 2004) and, more recently, 'leadership for learning' (Townsend et al, 2013). Although there are inevitable variations in commentators' conceptions of these models, the commonality that links them all is that they are instructional in the sense that they place teaching and learning as the prime focus of leadership but they also acknowledge the relationships involved in leadership and the notion that participative practices can distribute responsibility and accountability. For example, 'learning centred leadership' is suggested to encompass the core components of: high expectations and standards, a rigorous curriculum; quality instruction, a culture of learning and professional behaviour, connection to external communities and networks and systematic performance accountabilities (Reardon, 2011, Southworth, 2004). As the ideas inherent in 'leadership for learning' clearly acknowledge that learning is fundamentally about people, it is the model that my instructional practice most closely aligns with. However, what is not evident in this model is the responsive element that can guide leadership action. The key features of leadership for learning involve a direct focus on learning, the conditions for learning, dialogue, sharing leadership and sharing accountability. It is described by Townsend et al (2013, p35) as "Leadership for learning, as we interpret it, goes well beyond transformational leadership in that it expands leadership options beyond the leader, and it goes beyond distributed leadership because leadership needs to expand not only within the school, but at both district and systems level as well."

Making the point that 'educative leadership' which requires Head Teachers to have direct involvement in teaching and learning is unsustainable due to the excessive demands of the modern Head Teacher role, Webb (2005) is critical of 'instructional leadership' claiming that it is primarily effective only in achieving a narrow standards agenda. Espousing the merits of 'pedagogical leadership' (Sergiovanni, 1998) because it affords greater creativity, collegiality and innovation, for Webb (2005) there is a dichotomy drawn between the two kinds of leadership approach, 'instructional' and 'pedagogical'. Stemming from the work of Sergiovanni (1998), pedagogical leadership is understood to focus on care, diversity, inquiry and collegiality.

Pedagogic leadership is often seen in contrast to instructional based leadership (MacNeill & Silcox, 2003). The authors provide a useful working definition of pedagogy as "reasoned, moral, human interaction, within a reflective, socio-political, educative context that facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge, beliefs or skill (MacNeill & Silcox, 2003 p2). Webb (2005) describes instructional leadership as a variant of a transactional approach. Her analysis quite typically reflects the clear dichotomy that was drawn between some leadership theories in the early part of this century and is reflective of the limitations of an instructional model at the time.

There is an implication that if one favours a pedagogical child centred approach, focusing on transactional elements of leadership such as systems, procedures and activities which promote efficiency somehow compromise the values of people focused leadership. An example of people focused leadership is inherent in transformational and distributed models. In reality, Head Teachers often combine ideal theoretical models in practice (Day et al, 2000). This is perhaps the result of the limited knowledge available regarding the practice of instructional leadership and implementation of systems and structures that facilitate instruction. There is expansive knowledge about the overarching core practices of instructional leaders (Leithwood et al, 2006; Hallinger, 2009) but not actually how to go about these, which leadership actions to take to lead the development management systems and structures – the improvement process that results in effective outcomes. This research explores the core practices and processes involved in instructional leadership. It comments on *what* a leader might do and the systems and structures that might be put in place in order to secure positive outcomes for children.

Contrasting instructional and transformational leadership models, Hallinger (2007) notes that, while high expectations are a feature of both, culture building is only a feature of the transformational model. More recent conceptions of instructional models have assimilated relational concerns into their design. For example, the extremely comprehensive work of Robinson et al (2009), conducted on behalf of the New Zealand Ministry of Education suggests that, what they term, 'pedagogical leadership' has four times more effect on positive pupil outcomes than transformational leadership. It was acknowledged, however, that conceptions of each are beginning to incorporate elements of each other in that transformation leadership increasingly acknowledges specifically educational objectives while pedagogical increasingly attends to relational matters. The conception of pedagogical leadership for Robinson et al (2009) seems to retain the essence of an evolved instructional model in the sense that it: emphasises educationally focused goals, focuses on resourcing strategically, planning a co-ordinated curriculum, promotes professional development,

emphasises the creation of an educationally supportive environment and has relational concerns integrated into each dimension. The term 'instructional' is also used as an alternative to 'pedagogical' when referring to the same leadership research in an earlier article by Robinson in 2007. This illustrates that, from surveying the literature, the use of different terms by different commentators does not always seems to be reflective of vast differences in the main essence of the leadership theory, rather a case of preferred ways to present the theory. It may be the need to attend to historical connections, and the need to make ideas more palatable, that have led public perception as in Southworth's (2004) presentation of instructional leadership as learning centred leadership.

Interestingly, Robinson et al (2009) draw a distinction between direct and indirect leadership dimensions. The former is understood to be working directly with teachers and the latter altering the conditions in which they operate. Leadership dimensions from direct evidence include those outlined above. Indirect evidence, all with a direct focus on pupil learning, includes: creating educationally powerful connections between individuals, organisations and cultures, engaging in constructive problem talk and developing the use of tools and routines for their use. Although there is limited evidence regarding the relationship between leaders' knowledge, skills and dispositions in relation to pupil outcomes, the authors were able to establish some links about the knowledge and skills that leaders require to engage in the dimensions proposed. These are: ensuring that administrative decisions are informed by effective knowledge of pedagogy, the ability to analyse and solve complex problems, the capacity to build relational trust and to engage in open-to-learning conversations. Earlier work of Robinson (2006) notes that leaders need to retain an update breadth of pedagogical knowledge in order to lead instructional improvement and a balanced programme to prepare for instructional improvement in areas of identified inexperience.

The integration of collegial theories of leadership are also evident in the work of Robinson (2010) who, from surveying the limited evidence and theoretical analysis, tentatively proposes a useful model of the leadership capabilities required to engage in instructional leadership. These are suggested to be: the capacity to solve complex problems (through interpretation and engagement of others), building relational trust (through respect, regard, competence and integrity) and an integration of educational knowledge (through observation, feedback, evaluation and discussion). What Robinson (2010) also highlights, in her analysis, is the lack of knowledge that we currently have around the intricacies regarding the processes that are necessary for structural change. As it is clearly focused on developing leadership capacity and associated leadership

action, this research is able to contribute to our knowledge about *how* change is effected through the enactment of leadership action.

The following chapters trace my leadership journey in facilitating change in order to develop a primary school curriculum that creates opportunities for child initiated inquiry. As shall become clear throughout the analysis and associated discussion, by exploring my own practice and responding to the voice of others, I have acquired a deeper understanding of the dimensions of my own leadership in effecting change. This research is my contribution to close some of the gaps that currently exist in our knowledge of theories which places teaching and learning at the core of leadership.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Introduction

Beginning by outlining the philosophical perspective, which is probably best described as constructivist, underpinning this research, chapter three explores some of the literatures around practitioner action research and the ethical aspects of researching your own school. It is acknowledged that reflection on practice has not only informed the formation of policy in leading an organisation but has also influenced the choice of methods for this study.

The research design is discussed in relation to the initial research problem and it is argued that educational research should be about affecting positive change. Discussion around the rationale for the kinds of tools used to support the research is included. The literature informing the development of different tools such as photo elicitation, journaling and semi-structured interviews are also included and sample of these provided in the appendix section. A retrospective discussion around how some of the methods may have been improved and some of the difficulties encountered as part of the research process are an integral aspect of the discussion.

The Reflective Practitioner

I was first introduced to the idea of reflective practice through professional development opportunities in the mid nineteen eighties. The conception of the reflective practitioner was partially developed through the influential work of Schon (1983). This embodies the notion that, irrespective of the nature of the profession, in order to cope with previously un-encountered situations or problems there is a necessity to reflect on practice to learn for the future situations. In his discussion around professional knowledge Schon (1983) makes the distinction between technical rationality and reflection in action. The notion that there is a set technical body of knowledge that can be learned, transferred and applied in a professional context is rejected by Schon (1983). Working in the 'swampy lowlands' of professional situations, professionals are suggested to develop a tacit body of knowledge peculiar to their context. For Schon (1983) levels of professional consciousness are developed 'knowing in action', 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action'.

The idea of reflection and its role in the development of professional knowledge is a complex one. There is a danger that professional knowledge is seen as context specific and therefore irrelevant in relation to wider applications. To combat this, Hirst (1996) highlights the importance of developing a set of public and systematically structured practical principles that help to advance a

profession. Continuous engagement with theoretically based knowledge is suggested to provide the parameters and framework in which rational practices can be developed. In relation to professional educational practices, Hargreaves (1996) evolves the notion of teaching as a research based profession where a set of effective practices can be developed through research and applied in different contexts.

Some years ago, I was directed to visit a primary school to consider their new and innovative curriculum initiatives. The Deputy Head teacher and I enthusiastically went along to see what we could learn and subsequently apply to our own context. Very early on into the conversation with the welcoming Head of the school he mentioned that, since implementing his new curriculum, standards in the core areas of learning had dropped as measured by external performance indicators. We were promptly assured that this did not matter because the children were now more engaged in their learning and the teachers felt more enthusiastic when delivering the new curriculum. The Deputy Head and I immediately lost interest in the initiatives being demonstrated to us; as far as we were concerned this new innovation was not delivering effective practice if basic standards in the core areas of learning were declining. It does not have to be a choice between teacher and pupil engagement or standards. At this time, I had assumed that the fault lay with the curriculum and its content. I have since realised that it was the implementation of this and the lack of attention to professional practices to ensure effective implementation, that resulted in a measurable decline in standards.

I would strongly uphold the idea that professional knowledge needs to deliver a set of effective practices in any given context. However, I do not believe that this needs to be rooted in positivistic thinking in the sense that a set of practical principles and behaviours can be derived thorough teacher research and transported to different contexts to secure higher levels of pupil achievement. If that were the case, why have the 'strategies' heavily promoted in British state schools over the past decade, apparently premised on effective principles of teaching and learning, not delivered a rise in standards in every school? It is my belief that any innovation, initiative or set of practices, originating from teacher research or externally imposed, are likely to fail in any context unless they are not supported by continuous and open reflection 'on' and 'in' practice. It is this component that needs to be embedded in the development of professional knowledge as no set of practices can be static and unchanging; they need to respond to context. In view of this, for me, it is within the interpretative tradition that we are most likely to find the solution to developing accessible and applicable practitioner knowledge.

From my own observations of teachers in practice, there does appear to be a body of apparent and accessible knowledge held by experienced and effective teachers. However, as highlighted in the opening of this chapter, there is also knowledge guiding practice that is not always immediately accessible. This knowledge has been defined as intuitive and is described by Claxton (2003, p50) as "Intuitions are holistic interpretations of situations based on analogies drawn from a largely unconscious experiential database. They integrate (in an image or impulse) a great deal of information, but may also incorporate assumptions or beliefs that may be invalid or inappropriate. Thus intuitions are instructive but fallible hypotheses which are valuable when taken as such. The intuitive mental modes are not subversive of or antagonistic to more explicit, verbal, conscious ways of knowing; they complement and interact productively with them." In seeking to understand how explicit knowledge and implicit know how operate in professional contexts, Claxton (2003) proposes a family of intuitive processes as 'ways of knowing'. This family includes: expertise (unreflective execution of intricate performance), judgement accurate decisions (without initial justification), implicit learning (acquisition of expertise consciously or unconsciously), sensitivity (heightened attentiveness to details of a situation), creativity reverie (to enhance problem solving) and rumination ('chewing the cud' to extract meaning and its implications). McMahon (2000) describes intuition as similar to reflective practice but grounded in prior experience and prior learning and broader in scope than reflective practice.

My understanding of, and belief in, reflective processes has significantly informed my practice as a teacher and leader in the sense that, once my awareness was raised, I have always attempted to place reflection at the centre of my work. In evolving my practice, I have tried to use reflection at an individual and institutional level. It has significantly informed the formation of policy for the organisations that I have led. It later informed my methodology as a researcher and has influenced the choice of methods for this study.

My intention during this research was not only to acquire a set of explicit practices to guide me in implementing curriculum change, but also to try and access my own professional body of intuitive knowledge so that it became accessible and apparent. In this sense, I was trying to understand why my leadership was effective in different situations. It is evidently more difficult to establish why something works for one as a leader than to identify those glaring errors of judgements or thoughtless decisions that immediately fly back to us to remind us that our leadership action was inappropriate or misjudged. To realise this and make my own intuitive knowledge (implicitly guiding some of my practices) explicit, I elected interpretative methods to enable me to reflect 'on' and 'in' practice.

There are many strengths to reflective practice and it is consistently associated with school improvement (Halsall, 1998). It is at the heart of inquiry aimed at securing improvement, and, if coupled with critical thinking and emotional intelligence, can be highly effective in developing the practice of teaching (Day, 1999). However, attention must necessarily be given to the limits of reflective practice. It can be difficult to challenge beliefs and practices that have become a valued aspect of one's repertoire and change may be perceived as uncomfortable and disruptive (Day, 2000). The outcomes of self-reflection may also be inhibited by an inability to identify weakness in one's own practice. As Norton (2009, p23) explains, "We have to be particularly careful that reflection does not merely confirm our experiences and personal beliefs and values." It is also important that in reflecting on and about practice, the process does not become self-indulgent and inward looking; a kind of cocoon that confirms our value system and only raises the issues that we want to see (Durrant and Holden, 2006). What is important in reflection, whether linked to practice or research, is awareness - the capacity to acknowledge and confront weaknesses in refection and develop systems that are transparent and open to scrutiny and challenge. For a practitioner examining their own practice, the capacity to open the outcomes of their reflection to scrutiny is an important one. I entered into this research with this awareness and attempted to reflect this within my research design.

Practitioner Informed Action Research

Teacher inquiry has been described as "..a vehicle that can be used by teachers untangle some of the complexities that occur in the profession, raise teachers' voices in discussions of educational reform, and ultimately, transform assumptions about the teaching profession itself." (Fichtman Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p2). The authors further describe teacher inquiry as different to reflection in two ways. It is intentional whereas reflection can occur in an unplanned way and it is more visible and rendered open to public discussion and debate. For the purpose of research, this distinction is an important one. The emphasis on intentionality and visibility implies that action or practitioner research can be seen as systematic inquiry that is made public and practical (Dadds, 2006).

It has been suggested that the main purpose of research is to create new knowledge and understanding that we previously did not know. (Bassey, 1995). The principles behind practitioner inquiry have been suggested as: an educational focus that informs the professional concerns of educators, inquiry that is conducted as part of a discourse between practitioners and significant others, a range of confirmed approached to the study of education and research

methodology and an orientation towards intellectual autonomy and enhanced competence in the classroom. In addition to this, practitioner inquiry must necessarily retain a moral priority for the interests and welfare of the pupils and any participant involved in the research process (Murray and Lawrence, 2000).

When surveying the literature, there are a number of confusing terms used to refer to teachers researching practice. Thankfully, in their work on *Connecting Inquiry and Professional Learning in Education* Campbell and Groundwater-Smith (2010) provide a comprehensive discussion focused on the ways in which practitioner research has evolved. They argue that, irrespective of whether or not it is conducted by practitioners in the field or external researchers, practitioner research essentially encompasses all research about and into practice. Included within this are: pedagogy, curriculum and professional learning. I accept the authors' interpretations of this. In their own words, "Practitioner research, located in the larger field or practice-based and applied research, is distinguished by its focus on research done by practitioners themselves, usually an investigation of practice with a view to evaluation or improvement." (Campbell and Ground-Water-Smith, 2010, p13). It is further suggested that methodologically, practitioner research draws centrally on the methods inherent within the traditions of action research.

It is widely accepted that action research originated in the 1940s with the work of the American theorist Kurt Lewin. In the 1950s, Lewin, influenced by the earlier work of John Dewey and the notion of reflective practice, went on to refine this approach to research. Over the decades the methodology has evolved to incorporate an array of methods fit for purpose. There are a set of defining principles that distinguish action research from other forms of research; these include: bringing about social change, it is aimed at improvement, it is cyclical and has a scaffold based around spirals of reflection. It is also systematic, reflective, participative and determined by the practitioner (Norton, 2009).

The research orientation for action research essentially emanates from the interpretative tradition. Implicit within this understanding is that knowledge, inherent in the everyday lives of people, is valid and has relevance. In understanding the interpretations of people, we can therefore create new knowledge and understanding. As a leader of an organisation that deals with the lives of people and whose lives are ultimately influenced by the actions that I pursue within my role, I find this assumption sympathetic to my own value system. In my professional capacity and accompanying responsibility for securing improvement, my experience across a range of primary school settings has reinforced my belief that attention must be given to those who are subject to the change process and the context in which they operate. For me, therefore,

research should reflect similar principles. It seems to me that 'knowing something', accumulating knowledge through research, is of little use to the lives of young people unless it is accompanied by a series of possible solutions (in the form of actions) that will improve the provision for those who are the subject of the research. Action research, with its broad emphasis on systematic evidence collection and reflection on action provides an approach research that, I believe, can bring about beneficial change.

There are many different ways in which action research can be envisaged. One reason that it particularly appeals to me is that no particular methodology is dominant (Campbell et al, 2004). This enables the selection of appropriate methods that are most suitable to fit the research problem and the context of the research. Action research essentially comprises of a spiral of activity that involves: planning, acting, observing and reflection (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). A more detailed approach is defined by Bassey (1998) in response to three key questions: What is happening now? What changes will we introduce? What happens once the changes have been made? This model comprises of eight stages to the research cycle: defining, describing, collecting data, reviewing, tackling contradictions, monitoring changes, analysing changes and reviewing changes. For me, the strength of Bassey's (1998) model is not in the detailed stages but in the questions that provide the scaffold for each of the stages. Norton (2009) identifies one of the strengths of action research as flexibility to respond to the research question; as a practitioner researcher, this is important to me. The cyclical conception of action research proposed by Stringer (2007) described as 'looking', 'thinking' and 'acting' allows the flexibility that I am seeking as a researcher, in the sense that the phases are not constrained by either process or time but defined by an on-going cycle of activity. The researcher builds a picture by gathering data, defining and describing phenomena; thinking, exploration analysis and theorising then occurs. This is followed by planned action which is implemented and evaluated. As a researcher, I have a preference for a methodology that is fluid, open and responds to new learning; something that action research provides (Kemmis and McTaggart , 2000). As Koshy (2010, p7) states, "Excessive reliance on a particular model, or following the stages or cycles of a particular model too rigidly, could adversely affect the unique opportunity offered by the emerging nature and flexibility which are the hall marks of action research."

Within Social Science disciplines, there have been many decades of lengthy debate regarding the nature of knowledge and the kind of research methodologies that are most suited to assist in the accumulation of this. Whether or not the methodology of qualitative or quantitative traditions is most suited in the creation of new knowledge is not a debate that I wish to attend to

here. Although an interpretative methodology more readily aligns with my value system, I do not discredit the value of research that emanates from positivist and post positivist research traditions. For me, the emphasis must necessarily be placed on the most suitable methods to assist in solving the research question or problem. As Elliot (1991), a significant proponent of action research suggests, the production of knowledge is a subordinate concern. It is the change resulting in the improvement of practice and the promotion of reflection among practitioners that must remain a priority. Elliot (2007) further asserts the necessity for all teachers to develop methodological competence to enable them to research and ethically reflect upon their own practice.

As a Head Teacher, my foremost concern is to meet the educational needs of young learners -young people and, of course, the adults (also people) responsible for their education. Any research linked to this practice must therefore reflect similar principles. My value system denotes that the very act of working with people requires me to gain a deeper understanding of their subjective human experience – their human condition. My epistemological stance is therefore one which aligns with a constructivist understanding with an ontology that perceives reality as constructed by individuals through an inter-play between their subjective experience and the objects that they encounter in their everyday lives. This is aptly described by Stringer (2007, p193) as, "Social reality exists in an unstable and dynamic construction that is fabricated, maintained, and modified by people during their interaction with each other and their environment." In alignment with this perspective and for me to gain access or insight into 'reality', it is crucial that I understand how people perceive it.

In respect of what constitutes knowledge, I hold an inductive interpretation with an understanding that knowledge is a human production and our only way of knowing the world is in reference to what people make of their experiences. In view of this understanding, I clearly recognise practitioner research as a valid means of contributing to knowledge and fully support Saunders (2007) comments relating to practitioner research in her assertion that, "I've usually felt that I'm standing on firm intellectual and ethical ground believing in the capacity of research to deepen teachers' professional learning and individual practice (Saunders, 2007, p62). I also agree with the notion that practitioner research can create a site for the exploration of pedagogy as the basis for the professional practice of teaching (Saunders, 2007). As it is important for researchers to be fully conscious regarding the preconceptions that are brought to the research process (Morrison, 2002), I begin with the supposition that, in order to explore the adjectival aspect of education, I must necessarily select qualitative methods of inquiry.

The link between research and practice is addressed by Fox et al (2007) by their suggestion that research should provide the evidence upon which practice is based; in this sense, it needs to be 'evidence based'. It is further suggested that, to research one's own practice, it is necessary to develop the skill to do so. I would not refute the idea that practitioners need to develop necessary skills to research practice. However, rather than employing the notion of evidence, I have borrowed the term 'informed' and elected to use it to describe practitioner inquiry rather than 'based' from Lingard and Renshaw (2010). The authors insist that this gives relevant consideration to the professional discretion of teachers. This aligns more readily with my own value system, which does not wholly support the idea that professional practice can be 'based' on a set of transferrable professional practice, without developing teacher's reflective capacities as previously discussed. I understand the term practitioner research, in this context, to be systematic and public research that examines practice.

Another specific appeal of practitioner action research is not only the capacity to engage others in the research process, but the emphasis that is given to understanding what and why something is happening. Practitioner action research has been described as an activity that involves 'insiders' researching in their own setting (Anderson et al, 2007). The idea behind this research was to begin with a problem to be solved. Chapter one addresses a more detailed discussion of the need for this research and the contextual information underpinning it. However, for the purpose of clarity and to assist in the discussion of methods, it is useful to outline the purpose statement here.

The purpose of this research is to investigate what I need to do as a Head Teacher in order to facilitate change to develop a curriculum that provides opportunities for child initiated inquiry across the primary phase of my school. The central focus of the study is to gain an insight into the views of others within the school to inform my practice as a Head Teacher in leading and managing curriculum change.

In selecting methods that align with practitioner action research, I am not seeking to make generalisations from my research findings but I am seeking to further our knowledge of leadership action that will lead to effective curriculum change. This is not to suggest that the findings of this research are not transferrable to similar contexts. Using the metaphor of the wheel as Stringer (2007, p5) suggests, "Wheels provide a general solution to the problem of transporting objects from one place to another though there are many different purposes to which they are put." In the application of rigorous methods, my aim is to create new knowledge about leadership practice. As Fox et al (2007, p79)

succinctly describe it, “A helpful starting point for practitioner research is not to use action research to facilitate change in others. Instead practitioners can use action research to facilitate change in themselves. This is known as practitioner research.”

In attempting to effect curriculum change, I begin with the supposition that inquiry learning is a good thing and is something that is beneficial for the children both within school and throughout their learning journey in life. Prior to undertaking this research, I used my professional judgement in making the assumption that inquiry learning would give the children greater autonomy in leading the curriculum. The action- *the how* - behind the implementation of the principle of inquiry learning was the focus of my research.

Thematic Analysis

Ordinarily it may be more appropriate to discuss analysis following an outline of data collection methods. However, prior to a detailed discussion of methods, it is appropriate at this point to discuss an overview of the method of analysis within the research design as this is a strand that extends across all of the tools applied; it also attempts to link them together to create a coherent emerging picture. The purpose of analysis is to describe, summarise and make sense of the mass of information generated in words from interviews or from reflection and observation. In designing this research, I sought a method of analysis that enabled me to explore the relationships between ideas that were identified within each data set. To allow as much immersion in the data as possible, I elected to avoid the use of data handling packages that can electronically process verbal information such as ‘NVivo’. I wanted to be able to consider the complexities of tone, pauses and expression used in language as I was engaged in the analysis of data as this would provide an indication of not just what was said, but the sense of importance given to the content expressed. As I shall later discuss, I found that I gained a much greater insight from the interviews during analysis than I actually did when I was directly involved with participants.

Thematic analysis, sometime referred to as ‘framework analysis’ (Richie & Spencer, 1994) or ‘applied thematic analysis’ (Guest et al, 2012), is a means of categorizing qualitative data. The term ‘applied’ refers to the capacity of the method to solve a particular issue or problem (Guest et al, 2012). It is a data analytic strategy that facilitates the development of patterns and themes; a method of analysis that enables the researcher to get close to the data and allows a deeper appreciation of content. Suggesting themes are constructs that link expressions found in text, images, sounds and objects. Ryan and Bernard (2003, p87) describe themes as, “Some themes are broad and sweeping constructs that link many different kind of expressions. Other themes are

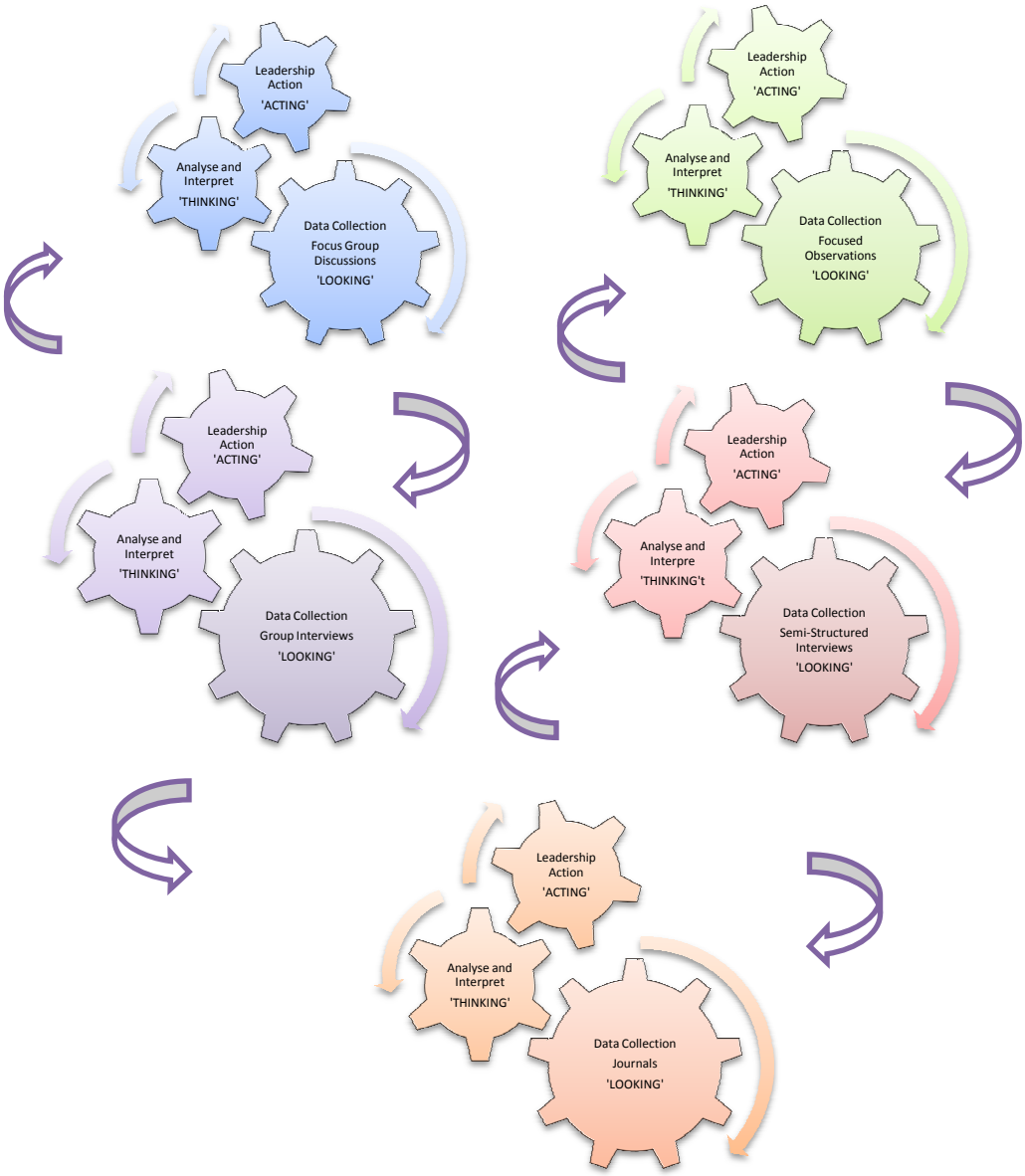
focused and link very specific kinds of expressions." Thematic analysis is a process of encoding information to develop codes or words for sections of data (Boyatzis, 1998; 1998a). Guest et al (2012, p10) describe it as "Thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data that is, themes." This form of analysis particularly appeals to me because it captures the complexities of meaning within data. It also allows the inclusion of exploratory concepts when designing the research tools but it also facilitates the inclusion of emerging concepts. In this respect, I was able to construct a broad frame to guide the research agenda and explore topics that may have been relevant to curriculum change but was not confined to this. Thematic analysis, coupled with a design that encourages the free flow of information enabled participants to express their views and for these to be identified and subsequently acted upon. The approach that I adopted to thematic analysis involved the following phases:

- Familiarisation with the data
- Generating 'codes' (in the form to words) relevant to the research question within data sets
- Searching for potential themes within each data set and identifying points for action
- Reviewing and charting themes across different sets of data and identifying points for action
- Defining and Identifying key themes for a holistic response to the research question

Analysis of the data was conducted in an inductive way from my reading of the data; the development of initial codes and eventual themes were directed by the content of the data. In this respect the purpose of analyses was primarily descriptive and exploratory. By analysing the data, I was seeking to understand how the participants perceived and expressed their reality and the impact that curriculum change was having on their experience of school, teaching and learning, whether an adult or child. The knowledge gleaned from this understanding was to direct my activity as a leader to ensure that I secured the implementation of positive processes and outcomes. For the purpose of clarity, I have presented the analysis process in a direct fashion. However, analysis of the data within these phases was not a linear process but part of fluid cycles of action research. Due to the nature of practitioner action research, data collection and analysis occurred concurrently. Comparative analysis across the data sets was undertaken to identify patterns in the data and the overall emergence of themes. Interpretation following analysis provided points for leadership action and further data gathering, analysis and interpretation; this created new knowledge which informed further leadership action.

The analogy of a series of cogs probably best describes the action research process and associated analysis and subsequent interpretation. Data was being collected and analysed systematically across a two year period. Journaling, focused observations and focus group discussions provided data collection opportunities across the duration of the research. Semi-structured interviews with adults and group interviews with children were conducted a year into the research project over a 3 month period of time. Each data set was informing the other and information elicited from one set of data was providing probing prompts for further inquiry for different phases of the research cycle. In this respect it was possible to gain a better understanding of emerging themes as the research progressed.

A visual model of the practitioner action research based model of method that demonstrates the fluid and interconnecting cycle of ‘looking, ‘thinking’ and ‘action’.



Methods

(1) Reflective Journal

The aim of reflective journal provided a structure to systematically reflect on my practice for the duration of this research. This was initially planned to be once a fortnight and recorded in typed format. Although the intended structure provided a scheduled period of time where I sat quietly and gathered my thoughts in respect of the research project, the content of the journal, although broadly focused on leadership, was always intended to be fluid. At the planning phase of this project I noted that the journal would address: the decision that I made in my capacity as a Head Teacher, direction setting, reflections on the national agenda and possible changes within this, tensions and dilemmas, ideas, my own feelings and perceived responses from others.

The typed journaling remained a constant feature of the research and served as an extremely useful tool to focus attention in a timed way. I was most appreciative of its inclusion as a research tool when the daily demands of my job regularly diverted my attention and thinking off track from the research that I was undertaking. It served as a constant reminder to revisit the research problem and also allowed me to reflect upon this in relation to current leadership matters that were a priority at the time. This served as a very powerful mechanism to ensure that the research remained faithful to traditions of practitioner action research in that, it was genuinely addressing the practice of leading and not something that I attended to in my spare time when all the 'proper work of leadership' had been done. In view of this, although the demand of my role and life in general sometimes meant that I could not afford the time to attend to the duties that accompany doctoral study, the research was genuinely focused on leading in a real context; real practice in action. As Carter (2003, p4) expresses it, "We start from the premise that what is known about school leadership in action is out there, being lived out daily by the leaders in our school." Journaling provided credible means of generating information regarding the practice of leadership.

Recording the journals as word processed documents aided reflection and reflexivity but, as I progressed through the research, I inadvertently introduced an additional journaling format that more readily captured my thinking in the moment. I had not anticipated the need for this at the outset of the project. Stepping back and collecting one's thoughts in a strategic way is extremely beneficial to analyse direction setting, influences, changing contexts and the response of others. What I found it less useful for was capturing leadership thinking in the moment. In view of this I also added a less structured kind of journaling that captured my thoughts as I was reading new texts or listening to recordings or just sitting and thinking about the leadership of the curriculum.

This was recorded informally in note books as thoughts in action; basically rough notes (or scrawls in many cases) that captured my leadership thinking in the moment whether stimulated by theory, an event in practice or just having the opportunity to ruminate over something I heard or seen, something that I had not reflected on in the moment. This more random approach to journaling enabled me to reflect deeply on my leadership practice and captured me in moments where I was mentally wholly attending to the thinking process. In more formal and scheduled opportunities to reflect, just because we have allotted time for the purpose of reflection does not always mean that we are in a reflective and deep thinking state of mind!

The following extracts, from my handwritten journals, illustrate my thinking about practice. As they were not formal journals, they were not dated. This sample illustrates a whole array of thoughts and questions addressing issues linked to my practice and the research process. Like the formal journals, these are also peppered with points for leadership action. They can also provide insight into some intuitive practices underpinning leadership thinking and action. Through reflection on these, I have been able to acquire a better understanding of my own deliberate and intuitive leadership practice.

Am I finding information to facilitate change? Am I getting feedback from my colleagues about my actions?

In the focused discussions, I tended to avoid reference to personal information and left (i.e. CPD) these for the individual interviews.

As a leader you need to scaffold the process. Some areas are more challenging, and by the way people respond, you know then whether or not they know anything about it.

Think about teacher 'mind sets'. They need to be risk taking but we have to create a climate to enable teachers to do that.

The idea of using photographs is so that the children can 'bring their ideas to the table' i.e. How does answering someone's closed question equate with having a voice?

Think about talk and the idea of the support being a co-worker; someone to scaffold the social inquiry process and enable the child to practice bouncing ideas off, giving suggestions and drawing these out. This needs to be a clear and explicit role.

Talk for inquiry; would this help in reception and year one, talk to write for inquiry?

Think about creating an inquiry structure so that both teachers and children can see the progression of skills. We can link this to the assessment of children.

Weakest in social skills; are these the ones who struggle with inquiry?

Do parents need a different view of what school should provide. It is a partnership isn't it? Have we lost this?

Inquiry - is it linked to parental background and life experience not academic ability? If so, are we just perpetuating the status quo? No – that's why education intervenes. At the moment yes but not if we teach them properly. If this is the case we MUST teach the skills!

Think about the new people coming in. They have an expectation to be inquiry based. To be effective teachers must instil independence; it should be part of their training.

It is important that we keep focused on the process. Good example of revisiting time lines. We don't always see the benefit (of our teaching) straight away. It's a different way of thinking about teaching.

If you can't work individually with a class, make them work individually for themselves. The top down approach doesn't work.

For leadership you need to be strong in directing the curriculum. You have to have the courage to lead it in response to children's responses. Perhaps evaluation should be about this?

Being vigilant about what the children produce (T2) but do we just need to change our view (or the children's) of what constitutes work. i.e. yes, they would prefer to make models but if we see our role as one who gets them to also write etc. and not see it as problematic and an issue then we have got it. A bit like a trainer, sometimes exercise hurts. It's a mind -set!

As a leader I need to feel an emotional investment in young people – I want to develop them towards excellence, to support their journey towards excellence. It needs to be more than sending them on courses.

To do – Use philosophy to improve speaking and listening. One hour a week. Outcomes in philosophy and reflect in books on this. Clear board in staffroom for inquiry trips.

Within my everyday practice, I have often noted some of my best leadership ideas literally on the back of an envelope or scrap bit of paper. Prior to commencing this research, I have always thought that this was rather unprofessional of me and was not the work of 'real leaders'. I now accept it as an acceptable mode of working because it captures thinking about practice in the moment (I do still ensure that I present it to others in a glossy, more conventional format). Combining both approaches supported deep and reflexive thinking about practice. On the strength of my own experience of journaling, I have introduced it to the teachers and the children so that they too can reflect on their inquiry practice and thinking in the moment.

Analysis of the journals was conducted by rereading them on a number of occasions and revisiting them in relation to particular issues that were emerging from other streams of data as it was being analysed. Campbell et al (2004) talk about professional identity, not as a stable entity, but as something that is used to explain and justify one self and actions in relation to others; a kind of making sense of the professional self within the context in which one operates. The very act of writing a journal and considering leadership action in the moment provided a formatively reflective aspect to the research and an opportunity to interpret practice. Additionally, analysis of the journals not only provided a sense of wholeness to the entire research project, in that a historical narrative was provided, analysis also provided an understanding of leadership practices, and the thinking behind these, that were guiding curriculum change.

One of the strengths of journals is that they provide a strong tool to secure reflection the 'way in which people explore and clarify their experience in order to lead to new understanding' (Fox et al, 2007, p184). However, their greatest strength can also be identified as a limitation. Previously in my discussion, I touched upon the importance of challenging reflective thinking so that, as researchers, we are not confirming what we already think or that aligns with our value system. While I did attempt to use the emerging evidence to challenge my leadership ideas, there was no mechanism in place for allowing an overt challenge of the records that I was making in relation to my reflective practice. For the purpose of reflexivity, I have to acknowledge that the knowledge that I was constructing in the journals and their subsequent analysis, although informed in part through social construction, was essentially my own subjective understanding of practice. The research design may have been strengthened if I had opened my journals to scrutiny and discussion by participants in the research. Although I frequently discussed my journals with a non-participant teacher colleague to gain their perspective on some aspect of my interpretation and they acted as a 'critical friend', the journals were not open to discussion for participating practitioners. I wished to preserve the openness of my journal entries so that I could better understand my own practice. In some instances my writings were very honest and uncensored. To maintain positive professional relationships, I felt that some journal entries would need to be removed prior to public consumption. To preserve the integrity of the journaling process, I elected to retain them as a personal reflective research tool.

(2) Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were selected to elicit information from the teachers and learning support staff. There were a number of reasons for selecting focus group discussions as a research tool. Not only do they: align with interpretative

traditions in that account for multiple realities and diverse opinions, can add depth due to the possibilities inherent in the researcher and respondent relationship and provide in-depth contextual understanding (Vaughan et al, 1996) they also have the potential to encourage participation of those who may be reluctant to engage in individual discussion for the purpose of research. In addition to this, the opportunity to interact with colleagues also provided a forum in which emerging issues could be debated among staff. I was hoping that this would provide a uniqueness and depth of thinking and ideas that was not as readily promoted through other forms of data collection (Stuart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Originally emanating from American marketing, Fern (2001) focus groups began to be recognised as important sources of data generation for social science research in the late eighties and early nineties (Vaughan et al, 1996). They essentially have four ways in which they can generate data: to support the development of hypothetical questioning, to provide insight onto statistical findings as a follow up method, to help gain an insight into survey responses and to assist in the development or evaluation of a programme or initiative (Barnett, 2002). My intention was premised on the latter function. I included focus groups in my research design to enable me to gather data about how staff construct meaning around their practice within the naturalistic context in which they work.

I perceive the dynamic nature of focus group discussions as a particular strength. They offer an opportunity to gather data that evolves over time and potentially provides a deeper understanding of emerging issues. In addition to this, focus groups also allow participants to engage in the research process at any point. If they are initially unable or unwilling to engage in discussion at the outset of the research project, participants' contribution can still be captured at any point in the research cycle. My sampling for focus groups was purposive. I elected to gain an insight into the views of the teaching and support staff. The dynamic nature of focus group discussion is also evident in that that they can readily identify points for action which can be revisited quickly in the research cycle. In this respect, they are potentially a very responsive means of gathering data for practitioner based research.

In discussing the challenges faced in using focus groups for descriptive or exploratory research, Kress and Shoffner, (2007) highlight the importance of not limiting the sample of participants and in using other data collection approaches to provide supporting evidence. In view of this, the focus group discussions were open to all teaching and learning support staff from the outset of the project. Additionally, the same potential subjects were all offered the opportunity of an

individual semi-structured interview so that they could elaborate on their interpretations. The opportunity to talk alone helped to compensate for the possibility that group dynamics may have prohibited some participants from fully expressing their view in a public situation. Privacy may have been required prior to some views being expressed (Morgan & Kreuger, 1993). There were no particular incentives offered for taking part other than the opportunity that participants' professional voice would be heard and there was an opportunity to shape the future direction of the curriculum and pedagogy.

For logistical reasons, the teaching and learning support staff were invited to participate in separate discussions. Focus group discussions with teachers were timetabled during our usual weekly staff meetings after school. The sessions for the support staff were timetabled during the day as personal commitments often limited learning support staffs' availability outside school hours and there was not the necessity to plan their lives (unlike the teaching staff) to manage directed time. Neither group were expected to attend; it was made very clear to all staff that their attendance was voluntary and this was reiterated on the 'staff notice board' prior to every scheduled focus group discussion. Although determined by organisational constraints, separating teachers and learning support staff did ensure that there were never more than twelve people present during a focused discussion. This provided a group large enough to generate discussion but small enough to enable all participants to contribute their views. Prior to commencement, an information sheet was distributed to all staff outlining the purpose and protocol for the focus group and this was placed in the wider context of the research agenda. Consent was sought from all participants to reflect their views in this research project (refer to appendix 1).

From the outset, all of the support staff elected to attend the focus group discussions. Initially two teaching members of staff chose not to engage in discussion but after one session, they also attended the rest of the focus group discussions. At each discussion the same people were not always present, if absence from work or personal commitments hindered their attendance, although this was not a significant factor in gathering data. My reflective journals at the outset of this research reflect my genuine surprise at how nervous some staff members felt in engaging in this research. In relation to the focus group discussion, this tended to be the teaching staff rather than support. At my first meeting with support staff I reminded everyone that they were not required to be present. I instructed them that I was going to leave the room so that anyone who felt unable to stay could leave. I promptly left and returned three minutes later to an empty room. Within seconds they all appeared from under tables and behind doors with a cheery greeting of boo! We laughed and then all those originally present participated in our first focus group discussion.

Some of the teachers acknowledged that they felt a little anxious about attending. Informal discussions indicated that this was primarily because they were unsure about what they had to offer the inquiry agenda; perhaps an indication that unfamiliarity was challenging their professional identity. As others fed back from the initial focus group discussions, this reluctance quickly subsided.

The focus group discussions all took place in the same setting, the staff room. Participants were seated around a large oval table. Each discussion was recorded; two microphones were placed at either end of the table. Field notes indicate that this was initially distracting for participants in the sense that people often commented on it at the outset but appeared to quickly accommodate their presence as they became more familiar with the context. Participants were informed that they could leave at any time and could request that any comment remain confidential either during the session or afterwards. Each discussion lasted up to 90 minutes. I acted as a facilitator/moderator for each session.

The role of the moderator/facilitator is suggested to be crucial in focused group discussions to retain a purpose for the discussion, facilitating an environment that is comfortable and to promote interaction (Gibbs, 1997). It is advised that the moderator is mentally prepared, uses pauses and probes appropriately, uses mild unobtrusive control and summarises as required (Krueger, 2002). As the moderator in our focused discussions, I could clearly identify an overlap between my role as Head Teacher in the school and researcher. Within the school, we have a long established set of implicit values that underpin our professional interaction with each other. This is evident in all staff meetings and it is often quite apparent when new people first join the staff group if they are not familiar with this etiquette. In this respect, the ground rules for focused discussions of no right or wrong answer, listening to one person at a time, no technological distractions and a respectful manner (Krueger, 2002a) were already in place. My role as moderator was primarily to facilitate discussion rather than exercise any management of the social context. The participants are likely to have responded in a similar manner to how they might in any staff meeting. This may have had disadvantages in the sense that some may have elicited a different response if not constrained by their professional setting and if the session were not led by a team member. However, I allay any concerns that I have with regard to the participants' authenticity of responses by acknowledging that practitioner research is conducted within, and for, professional purposes. Therefore how individuals feel, their views, and responses within this context, is likely to reflect their most natural state when in a professional capacity. The data generated from this, which ultimately informs leadership action, emanates from a context where practice is in action. In this respect it is highly relevant.

A questioning format provided the discussion guide for each session. The questions for each focus group discussion were dynamic and focused on eliciting views about a matter or exploring practice in greater depth (refer to appendix 2). Prior to each new focused discussion, the questions were generated from issues that were emerging from data collection from other sources such as: reflective journals pertaining to planning, observations on professional practice and thoughts about the emotional climate within the school, focused observations of inquiry lessons or, later in the research cycle, individual interviews. An open style questioning structure also enabled participants to introduce matters from discussion that were relevant to them. This approach was to prove very powerful in creating an opportunity to revisit emerging issues or to provide clarity on particular matters. Following analysis and feedback, as an outcome of this approach, I was able to redirect my leadership actions in mid flow and respond quickly to issues as they emerged.

Ten focus groups discussion took place. These were initially analysed as soon as possible following the interview, usually within one or two days of them occurring. The first part of the analysis was to immerse myself in the data to gain a degree of familiarity with it. I listened through it once to gain a sense of wholeness and to consider the main views being expressed. I then repeated this process but stopped the recording to make notes and attempted to draw out the main ideas being expressed within the discussion. This was then typed and presented to those present in the focus group discussion for their written or verbal comments. At the beginning of subsequent focus group discussions, these notes were then revisited and any comments noted or picked up during the course of further discussion. This was the first step in coding the data and looking for emerging themes.

One way of defining codes is to focus on the topic or content of what people have said. Commenting on the use of focus groups in research linked to nursing, Reed & Roskell Payton (1997) make the pertinent point that simply retrieving all of the things that people have said is of little analytical use as it simply produces a list of topics. For them, a richness of data was produced in returning to the discussion or transcript to identify the sequence of discussion. They also found it necessary to conduct analysis across focus discussions to obtain a sense of wholeness. They conclude from their own research experience that attention should be paid to issues of time and person in order to gain a fuller understanding of the phenomena under study. The data was initially coded using the categories: choice, resources/affordance, organisation, motivation, challenge, talk, self-direction, social development, cohesion, adult role, progress, home learning, parents and other. This was linked to whether or not the idea expressed linked to staff, children or teaching and learning. Themes emerged

from analysis of the language used in discussion, the consistency and frequency in which issues were raised, the extensiveness and intensity of comments, the specificity of comments linked to personal experience and the main ideas or trends expressed by participants (Kreuger, 2002). Any points for leadership action were then noted through the reflective journals. The focus group discussion data was then revisited later in the research cycle and compared with additional codes and themes emerging from other data sources. Although I was, to some extent, attempting to compartmentalise the data by coding it, I also wished to retain a sense of wholeness to the data so that comments were not separated from context. For this reason the data was directly coded and emerging themes noted directly on the script produced from the discussions.

Discussion is at the centre of focus groups; this generates key themes. However, in analysing the discussions, what was equally as powerful was what was omitted from the conversation or silences (Grudens-Schuck et al, 2004). This provided some insight into the values of the participants or indicated their lack of experience of familiarity with a situation. For example, in discussions around what was important to children, the teachers were not forthcoming in acknowledging the importance of their personal relationship with the child in the same way that the children highlighted this. Neither did the adults acknowledge the importance of social groupings in the same way as the children. Other than identifying it as an important concern, conversations around assessment for inquiry were initially stilted which suggested that little was known or understood about this. The omissions were therefore as important in generating knowledge for instructional leadership action as the themes emerging from the views of the participants.

Iteration was important in securing a deeper understanding of the data; as Srivastava (2009, p77) notes, “Reflexive iteration is at the heart of visiting and revisiting the data and connecting them with emerging insights, progressively leading to refined focus and understandings.” By working through the cyclical research process and engaging with the focus group data I was able to connect the emerging themes to my leadership practice. A deeper understanding of the issue emerging was also directing and refining my inquiry.

I found focus group discussion to be a very powerful tool in maintaining continuity to my understanding of the emerging issues. Retrospectively, now in a position to acknowledge the flexibility and accessibility of this method, I should have included focus group discussions with the parent community. This would have provided broader contextual information pertaining to some of the issues that emerged from data analysis such as: home learning, children’s relationships

with their teachers and the social dimension of learning. These were key themes emerged from data analysis across the different data sets.

Perhaps due to the school's etiquette surrounding staff discussion more generally, the focus group discussions did not generate a lot of disagreement. Participants tended to express their view and this remained largely unchallenged (other than by myself, if I wished to gain a deeper insight into what the person was saying). Overt dissent may have accelerated the process of acquiring deeper understandings within the group. It may also have enabled individuals, who were required to clarify their view, a deeper understanding of issues in that moment (Kitzinger, 1994). Since the more formal focus discussions have ceased, my leadership action was to replace them with scheduled opportunities for professional dialogue which are theme/issue focused but not recorded. I believe that this research has been instrumental in changing the culture among the staff in shaping how we talk about professional matters and pedagogy. People are now more likely to challenge each other's view point. They still retain a professional courtesy but are more inclined to disagree; this is generally positively received and generates information for further discussion. It is likely that this can be attributed to familiarity with the professional discussion process enriched by focused group discussions and a deeper, and more confident, understanding of pedagogy.

(3) Group Interview facilitated by photo elicitation

In my professional role as a teacher, I have always been very mindful of the power differential between an adult and a child; this is never more evident than in the context of a one to one interaction. My practice has always been guided by the principle that it is important to reduce the potential for adult intimidation whether supporting a child as part of their special needs provision or correcting their behaviour due to a misdemeanour (and all of those situations that might occur along this continuum). It was this principle that determined my choice of method as a researcher intended to elicit information from the children. Although I generally perceive myself as someone who is approachable, it would have been naive of me to underestimate the intensity that an individual interview situation may have created. As Head of the school, the children clearly relate to me in this role. Due to the methodological difficulties in eliciting, collecting and interpreting information from children's thoughts (Hazel, 1995), my choice of method attempted to reduce the power differential. As I was interested in evoking the views of the children, it would not have been in the interest of this research to stifle the free flow of ideas and views by placing participant children in a situation that may make them feel uncomfortable or

afraid to voice their opinion due to the perceived power differentials between adult and children (Kaplan, 2008).

The purpose of group interviews was to provide a context in which children were able to support one another, practically and emotionally; a context in which the children could remain silent should they wish to or be spurred on by the group dynamic. The sample selected to participate in the project was purposive. Six children from year groups; three (7-8 year old), four (8-9 years old), five (9-10 years old) and six (10-11 years old) were invited to participate. This generated 24 children in all participating in the group interviews. The sample was agreed through discussion with the class teachers who were asked to suggest a boy and a girl from each of the three main ability bands within each class as referenced to national expectations and existing contextual standards (below average achievement, average achievement and above average achievement). A letter was sent to parents explaining the research and a more simplified version was provided for the children (refer to appendix 3). Written consent was sought from both parties and it was made clear that the children could withdraw from the research at any point should they deem this necessary. None of the children or their parent declined the invitation to participate and no child elected to leave the research process.

Engaging in research that involves young people inevitably poses potential difficulties linked to the child's capacity to fully express their ideas and views. Young children are developing their language structures and vocabulary, therefore their capacity to verbally express themselves is largely dependent on their place along this continuum. Indeed, it can be argued that qualitative research, irrespective of the age of the participants in the research, can be constrained by language itself so it is therefore important to explore other modes of expression that provide an insight into social processes (Schratz, 1993). In addition to this, children often hold a distinctly different world view to that of adults and can focus on different issues than an adult might (Burke, 2006). In an attempt to capture perceptions through the 'eyes of the child' in a manner that was inclusive and accessible to them, I elected to use visual images in the form of photographs.

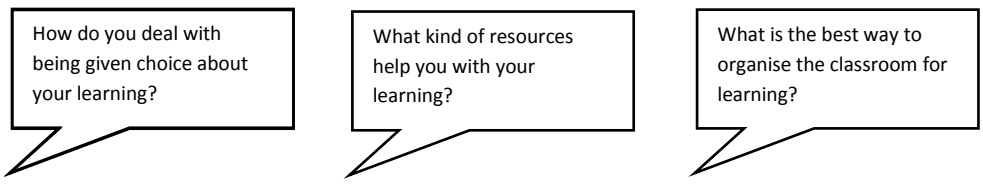
Originally emanating from anthropological research and linked to cultural studies, the earliest conceptions of photographs in research was as representations of cultural realities. This was widened later to encompass research linked to ethnic identity, behaviour, enhancement of memory retrieval, programme evaluation in medical research. The idea of using photographs to elicit information in an interview situation is less widely explored (Hurworth, 2003, Thomson, 2008). The earlier conception of photo interviewing involved

the researcher selecting and presenting images to participants to evoke discussion. This evolved over time to entrust participants to select their own photographs - images taken by participants to reflect their conceptions of reality. This approach was significantly developed as a method by Prosser in the nineteen nineties. Prosser (1998) makes the important point that a research design that enables participants to select the image that they wish to discuss in an interview situation reduces the likelihood of the researcher imposing their own expectations and interpretations. This approach is now more commonly referred to as 'photo-voice' (Hurworth, 2003) and was the method that I selected to gain access into the perceived strengths and concerns of the children through dialogue around inquiry teaching and learning.

In attempting to capture the view of the child through their eyes – their lenses, the images that there were to present for discussion were selected by the children themselves. Each of the six children in each group was given a digital camera and asked to take photographs to illustrate their views or capture their experience about a set of issues. The class laptop was set up in each of the four Key Stage Two classes for the children to download their images. Permission was obtained from class teachers to allow the children to freely take photographs during the school day. The children were instructed that they could capture images whenever they deemed it appropriate and download these to present in the interview situation.

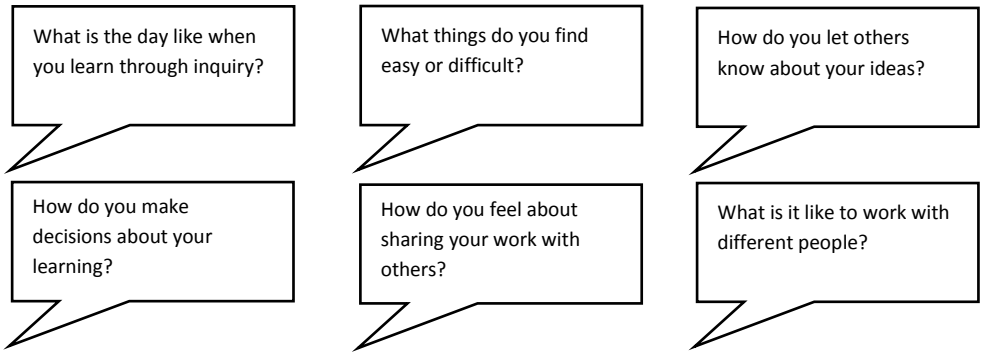
A brief session on handling the cameras was provided for the children. However, many of the older children were already very proficient in handling digital technology and the children facilitated one another's understanding in this respect. In order to focus the children's activities and manage the interview situation, each of the four groups of six participants were met by myself individually and given a set of prompts (in the form of questions). These were presented to the children, on a rotation basis, in three phases. An overarching question was provided for each of the three phases and a series of prompts accompanied these. The children were then given at least a week to take their photographs. The three phases were as follows:

Phase 1 - How do we learn?



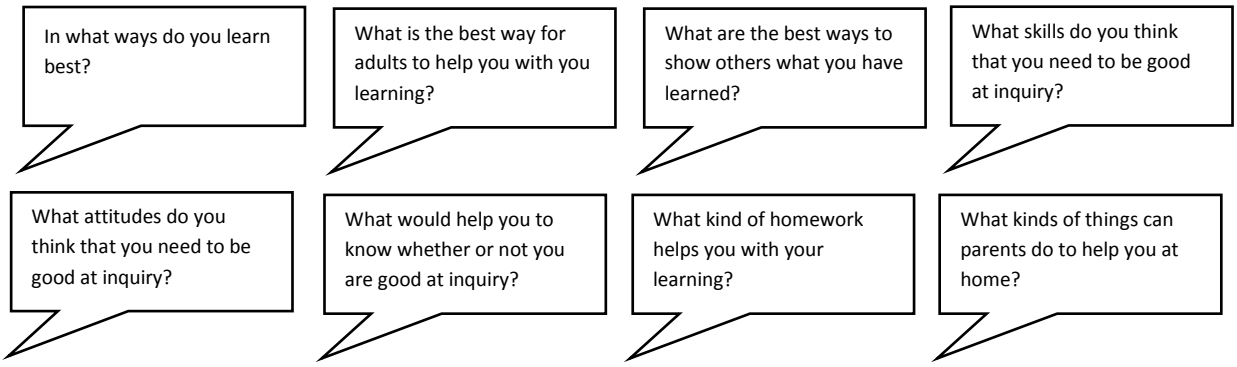
Take 6 photographs for each question and we will discuss your favourite 2.

Phase 2 –What do we feel, what do we do?



Take 4 photographs for each question and we will discuss our favourite 2.

Phase 3 - What can you do to help us?



Take 2 photographs for each question for us to talk about.

Once the children had been given time to gather their images, I met with them as a group of six for the group interview. Each interview began with a reminder to the children that they were not required to stay for the duration of the interview and that they could ask for any comment not to be repeated. No child elected to leave the interview but some children did request that their comments remain confidential. Their requests to not repeat a comment tended to follow a disclosure about an individual child or a particular teacher; these do not appear in the transcript or analysis data. Each of the three interview phases was audiotaped and lasted approximately 45 minutes per session.

During interview, no particular specific schedule was presented to the groups; the children were asked to volunteer to show their images to the rest of the group and this determined the direction of the interview and the questioning. Each child presented their images in a format most suited to them; some children elected to share their ideas in pairs. As each of their chosen images were presented, the children discussed what they felt the image demonstrated and these images were then used as a focus for discussion and questioning.

These pictures illustrate those typically presented by the children for discussion. The children used images to capture and discuss their interpretation of school life and their views about this.

The children presented a whole array of images in response to the question prompts presented to them. As Thomson (2008) highlights, images are not neutral. I wanted the children to guide the course of our discussion by sharing their priorities with us through the presentation of images. In this respect I wanted to access their values and motivations. Images of children working (in groups and individually), staff, resources, visitors, displays, the classroom environment, the grounds, examples of work and even the toilets were presented for discussion. I requested that the children capture their own images, rather than presenting photographs that I had selected. The intention was in order to illuminate the subjective experience of the children (Warren, 2002). The children were asked to adhere to a protocol that sought permission from the subject prior to a photograph being taken or, to avoid a self- conscious pose, after the image had been taken if it was to be used in discussion. There were no adverse consequences reported from other children or staff in relation to the children's use of cameras. In fact, a year after this phase of the research had been completed the older children were engaged in a project capturing images of inquiry. These have since been displayed as large images around the school and serve as a reminder of inquiry skills and attitudes linked to our self-assessment procedures. A number of other engaging projects employing the use of cameras have since been initiated across the school and cameras are now used more widely as part of curriculum activities.

In order to solely limit the children's responses to what the camera captures (Smith et al, 2012), a questioning prompt sheet was used to probe the participants' responses to particular topics during the interview. For clarity, the questions were grouped into interview phases. However, this was not used in a linear manner; the children largely determined the direction of the discussion. The prompts were used to probe more deeply if an issue was raised by the

children and discussion was not confined to the areas outlined in the prompts (see appendix 4). What I found most striking during my interviews with the children was their propensity to revisit a point until they felt it had been heard. Kaplan (2008) discusses the power dynamics existing between adults and children and the possibility of wariness on the part of the participants to volunteer negative information. I will never know what the children did not disclose to me, but many of them showed great tenacity in getting their view across (albeit very politely). I had not initially anticipated the persistence with which they would express their views in relation to some matters, whether it was related to inquiry or otherwise. Even when I felt that a particular child's point had little to do with furthering my research agenda and subtly tried to move the discussion on, (for example how the toilets are left after lunch time and the irritation felt with having to change into indoor shoes) I was met with polite persistence on many occasions. Many of the issues raised by the children have been addressed in the analysis of data in chapter 5. Other issues, not discussed, have been addressed as part of my leadership strategy more generally.

Kaplan (2008) makes the point that, to avoid tarnishing a school's public image, views of students can be silenced by leadership. What was noticeable in this research was that the 'negative' issues that the children discussed in the group interview situation were not evident when the children produced information for the public domain. As a responded validation exercise, the children were asked to share their views of inquiry; the original questions provided a scaffold for this. This could take the form of a flyer, video or Power Point presentation. It was as though the children had censored the material themselves. This may have been because they wished to present the school in a positive light, because there was a time lapse between the collection of data and the presentation of ideas and the children's views had changed or, indeed, because they felt that, as the leader of the school, I may have disapproved if negative information was distributed into the community. What this does illustrate is the possible limitations of making children's views public. The three phase interviews were a more discerning form of respondent validation as a way of checking the children's views by probing issues raised in one session in a subsequent discussion. Asking the children to produce flyers and presentations gave them a real purpose for investigating their learning environment and a focus for their photography. However, the public nature of this communication is likely to have restricted the children to reporting only their positive views. In this respect, this method was of limited use as a responded validation technique.

There were various levels of analysis of the group interview data. Once each phase of the interview was completed, I listened to the audiotape to gain a sense of wholeness. I then listened to it again and looked for issues that seemed to be

significant for the group. The discussion notes from this exercise provided a focus for further questioning and to check my understanding when I met with the children for the next phase of their interview. In this respect, I was able to validate my interpretation of their views from the previous meeting.

The second stage of the analysis involved organising the verbal data into codes that corresponded with topic under discussion, a kind of topic ordering (Radnor, 2002) and whether this linked to staff (S), other children (C) or directly to teaching and learning (TL). Colour codes were used to determine the topic category such as choice or resources, motivation, cohesion etc. (refer to appendix 5 for examples). The following extracts illustrate how the data was initially coded. Some topic areas were predetermined from the beginning in the sense that, through the questions aimed to direct their photography, the children had been asked to consider and express their views in relation to specific topics. Others emerged as a result of the interests and key areas that the children introduced into the research agenda.

	Motivation		
C	*How would a teacher know if you are enjoying something?*	10.57	We'd be getting on quite happily. *Well, we'd be discussing it.* To be honest when we did the geography when you can do different countries, I decided to work by myself I know that if I went with someone they'd probably mess around. I didn't talk, I just got on.
C	Challenge	10.13	I find it difficult to co-operate because when I was with T, I sometimes, he couldn't be bothered to do it so I had to do it. In the end I did like quite a bit.
	Do you think some children make more effort than other?		Definitely. It's if they enjoy doing things. *You can see it in their behaviour if they are enjoying it or not.*
S	Organisation	16.33-2	I think that we should be given time to finish things, that was in winter time that we did that and he still hasn't given us time to finish it.
S	Motivation		
	How do the adults know if you are enjoying your learning?	10.07	Well sometimes you can tell by your face or if you are slouching or something like that. Sometimes maybe the work you produce.
		10.43	The thing about the slouching, you do get told off, they can tell if you are not really doing it.
		10.52	Teachers do know if you like it or not because if you like it you want to interact a bit more. Say if you've got a question about history and you really like history then you'd put you hand up a lot more.
		11.15	You know the bit about slouching, that's one thing and the other thing is that sometimes if you don't do enough you have to do it in your own time. I think that's a bit cruel if you don't like something and

			you don't want to do it you can force them. Well we have to do it but….

TL	Choice	27.58	Feel good when making choices about work. Feel quite responsible.
	How do you feel when adults make decisions for you?		Sometimes I feel a bit bad and sometimes I feel okay with it.
		12.05-2	I sometimes enjoy it; I think we should choose the book ourselves.
TL	Resources/Affordance	1.40-2	The 'Activote' is good, voting for stuff, if you're confident or how we improve. You can share your ideas without telling people.
		8.37-2	These are like some of the voting things we use, A, B, C or D, they are good fun.
		14.18-2	I took that because we don't just have books in our classroom, we also go in the library.
		12.38-2	Sometimes we go in Olympia (general storage area) to help us learn.
TL	Organisation	1.02-2	As we are going to be the oldest in the school we need more responsibilities.
	Do you like the idea of working in mixed age groups?	11.06-2	I don't.
		11.20-2	Well I like it sometimes.
		11.23-2	It depends on the subject.
		15.40-2	I think we should change the displays. That's been on quite a while and the Lowry one.

Once the data had been coded, it was then analysed again to search for themes both within each data set and then across all of the group interview data. All of the themes emerged from the data itself. This aspect of the analysis was intended to return a sense of wholeness to the data as the extract below indicates. The notes shown in bold script indicate the kind of themes beginning to emerge from the data. Once this process was complete, the data was then cross referenced to other data sources to identify key themes.

Key themes

- A female pupil chose to present a picture of the end product that she produced when working in a pair. She went on to discuss how some children mess around when given a choice while others just get on with it. **(SOCIAL CHOICES)**
- The same pupil then showed images of a display that they put up with the help of their teacher. **(DISPLAY)**
- A male pupil presented an image to show how the children are getting on well when given a choice.
- The children suggested that they felt a bit controlled when the adults make all of the choices. One pupil recognised that at time this was important because it helped with ideas for inquiry. The idea of being given different possibilities for choice was favoured by the children – a range of ideas was preferred. **(CHOICE)**
- A female pupil introduced an image of the children working well together. One pupil preferred to work alone so that he could set his own pace. **The teacher evidently guides the children's decisions about making choices rather than prohibiting their choices. The children were able to reflect well on this and it appears to be informing their judgements. (CULTURE)**
- When making choices the children suggest that the teacher encourages them to challenge themselves; they felt that in most cases when given a choice.
- The children believe that the adults probably think that they make good choices. Even if the teacher thinks that it is not a good group he still allows the children to stick with their decision. **The culture that the teacher is setting in allowing the children making errors seems to instil a greater sense of responsibility for the children, they talk very calmly about the decisions that they make. This seems to be more beneficial than prohibiting children's choice and allows them in a safe context to reflect on their decisions. (TEACHER'S ROLE)**
- The children presented images of children working well together and the idea of getting on and producing came across quite strongly as they discussed their images. **(SOCIAL CHOICES)**
- The children felt that decision making between the adults and the children should be equally shared with a teacher stepping in when necessary. A male pupil suggested that he would like a little more freedom as he believed that this would be the case at secondary school. The other children supported this idea. **(CHOICE)**
- A male pupil discussed how he would handle it if people are not working in his group.

(Refer to appendix 6 for an additional example)

I found the group interviews supported by photo elicitation a highly effective way of encouraging the children to express their views. Organising the children into small groups appeared to establish a comfortable conversational environment necessary to evoke an unguarded response (Danby, Ewing & Thorpe, 2011) and helped to manage the power differentials between the adult and the child. The use of self-selected images provided a format for discussion that, although framed by an adult, was ultimately led by the child. The images tended to provoke thinking and created something that the children could base their language and expression around. This was particularly helpful for the younger participants whose vocabulary was inevitably more restricted than their older peers.

In research terms, the management of myself as a researcher was crucial. In order to retain a relaxed context for discussion, it was important that I was not too prescriptive with the children. I had suggested taking a certain number of

photographs to create an initial structure but did not stick to this in the interview; neither did I greet each question in order. The children led the discussion by presenting the images that were of interest to them. Some children chose to omit questions or present images that did not specifically link to any of the prompts that I had originally presented. It was rather like setting the wide parameters and allowing the children to create within these. It was this flexibility that yielded a richness of data that helped to steer my future leadership action.

(4) Semi-structured Interviews

Describing an interview as a conversation with another person, verbal questionnaire or life story, Anderson et al (2007) recommend interviews as a useful tool to find out how another person feels about past or current events. In view of this, interviews presented me with a potentially strong research tool to help inform leadership action. Essentially an interview is a managed verbal exchange between two people (Richie and Lewis, 2003). In this respect, it is crucial how the person interviewing interacts and communicates with the interviewee (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012).

An interview can be viewed as an interactional event in which the person interviewing and the interviewer jointly construct meaning. (Garton & Copland, 2010). As a practitioner researcher and the need for critical reflexivity (Creswell, 2009), I was mindful of my prior relationship with the participants of this research. I was aware that I had already formed different relationship and ways of communicating with different staff members that may both influence their willingness to participate in the research and how they responded to my questioning. I acknowledge that prior relationships, where openness and trust have already been established, can greatly enhance the practitioner action research process in that they can lead to a depth of response, yielding a richness of data that might otherwise be lost to an external researcher (Garton & Copland, 2010). Action researchers are best placed as 'insiders' within an organisation and this is integral to the research process (Lomax, 1995). However, I also needed to be mindful of the power differentials that my role as Head Teacher of the organisation I was researching may present. I was conscious that participants may not volunteer any information that could be construed as critical of school systems or my leadership of this. I was also aware of the possibility that responses may be tailored to avoid displeasing me (Murray & Lawrence, 2000).

Commenting on the value laden nature of action research as Lomax (p52, 1995) suggests "The enquiry is not meant to be comfortable. Taken for granted values need to be explored. The action researcher is committed to interrogating her own values and examining any discrepancy between her values and her practice. She should question her own assumptions and be prepared to change the way she conceptualises issues." To be able to fully engage in this process, I needed a set of research tools that would encourage participants to fully express their

views so that, if necessary from analysis of the data, I would challenge mine and redirect my leadership action appropriately.

Henning et al, (2009) define a semi-structured interview as one which allows the researcher freedom to probe participants' responses with a series of follow up questions. This flexibility is suggested to be particularly useful if a participant elicits an unexpected response or interesting information. In this respect questions, and subsequent prompts, are not delivered in a linear, ordered fashion and may be excluded from some interviews if not deemed relevant to the direction that the interview takes. Describing semi-structured interviews as a 'half-way house' between structured and unstructured interviews, Hannan (2007) emphasises the considerable flexibility of a semi-structured approach to interviewing. They allow key questions to be defined at the outset but with opportunities for additional topics to be introduced into the dynamics of conversational exchanges as the interview progresses. It was the flexibility offered by a semi-structured design that led to their inclusion in this research; this design allowed me to directly address particular issues pertinent to the research question and probe any reluctant responses in a suitable way (Corbetta, 2003). In many respects I was seeking to establish patterns in highly personalised data, interviews provided a vehicle for this (Gray, 2004). A semi structured design also permitted interviewees licence to direct the interview discussion in any direction that suited their agenda.

The sample selected for interviews was purposeful in the sense that it was open to all teachers and learning support staff within the school. I relied solely on voluntary participation and made it very clear to all staff that this was not an expectation. To help to manage the interview process and account for the organisational difficulties that some staff members experience due to demands on their personal time, all interviews were conducted within the school day. Class cover was arranged for those who required it. In order to avoid too many disruptions to the teaching day, I presented potential participants with a timetable so that they could schedule the interview at a time in the week that best suited them. All participants were given a clear indication of the purpose of the interviews and a schedule being used to manage the interviews (refer to appendix 7). Twelve staff members elected to participate in the interview process. Two of these were conducted as pilot studies and helped to create a frame of topics for the final interviews. The ten remaining volunteers contributed to the data source emanating from the semi-structured interviews.

All interviews were conducted in my office. This was decided for logistical reasons as space within the school is at a premium and interruption could be easily controlled. Although I could not identify any clearly negative aspects of this context, as I often have in depth conversations relating to all sorts of matters (formal or otherwise) with the staff in my shared office, retrospectively it may have been more suitable to conduct the interviews on more 'neutral' ground (if this does indeed exist anywhere within the school). Simply by choosing to conduct the interviews in my office, I may have introduced a power differential

that may or may not have been there (or possibly exacerbated an existing one). As Head of the school, I cannot alter the fact that my position will have an effect on my location as a researcher and how I am perceived by others; this will inevitably impact on the dynamics within the interview situation. My position within the school and the physical context selected for the interviews will have inevitably contributed to the kind of data produced from the interviews. Depending upon the depth of response from the participants, each interview lasted between 45 – 90 minutes. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

Following the pilot studies, an interview frame was finalised. The rationale behind the initial questions was to explore the participants' views, and gather data, in relation to the development of inquiry on: themselves as practitioners, the perceived effect on the children and issues linked to teaching and learning more generally. The initial topics included were those that had emerged from the on-going focus discussions or issues that had been raised in the pilot interviews. I also included issues which I felt it important to consider in helping to direct my leadership action. I had initially intended to record in written format whether or not I had used a follow up prompt throughout the course of the interview. However, I found that any attempt to make notes during the interview hampered the natural flow of conversation. Neither did I find written notes a necessity to ensure that we addressed pertinent issues relevant to the research question. As I became more aware of the issues through my on-going research and those that my attention was being drawn to through conversation with the participants, I had a kind of working knowledge – an understanding which I brought to each interview. In this respect, I was able to introduce prompts and subsequent probes linked to topics that followed the natural course of conversation rather than in a linear and formal manner. Throughout the interview process, as the person leading the interview, I was keen to maintain a 'natural rapport' to maintain the dialogue (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). It also allowed the interviewees to take the conversation in a direction that reflected their views and values as opposed to having these imposed and solely directed by the research process.

At each interview session, I briefly explained the protocol for the interview to assure participants that they could leave the process at any point or request that any, or all, of our discussion be removed from record if they wished. I also reaffirmed the eventual anonymity of the comments being made. I explained the use of the semi-structured questions that I would refer to throughout the interview but assured each person that they must not feel obliged to confine their comments to this and to feel free to discuss any topics that were relevant to them. I requested permission to audiotape each interview.

Each of the participants was engaged in an in-depth interview on one occasion. The interview process was inevitably influenced by my prior relationship with the participants and their characteristics as a person (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Despite this, the interview process provided a forum for in depth professional

dialogue. The quality of the data collected at interview is heavily influenced by the strength of the relationship established between the interviewer and the interviewee (Adler & Adler, 2002). I cannot be wholly sure how the participants felt during the interview process but their demeanour was positive and receptive. Additionally, informal feedback suggested that the volunteers found the process useful and enjoyed the opportunity to share their ideas, which may have realised their intentions as to why they agreed to participate in the first instance (Berg, 2001). Both as an action researcher and a leader, I personally found the process to be intellectually stimulating and professionally enlightening. At no point in any of the interviews did I feel that I was managing (in a leadership sense) the situation. I felt that I was genuinely engaged in the process of finding out information that would inform my practice.

In analysing the interviews, each interview tape was listened to and a series of notes made. What was particularly interesting, from a researcher's stance, was that, being away from the social context and with no reference to body language etc., it was much easier to focus on the content of dialogue. This afforded greater insight into the views of the staff than was evident to me when in the actual interview itself. Once this was completed, each tape was transcribed. The transcribed material was then coded to mark out the topics under discussion. This was then analysed to search for emerging themes. The audio tapes were then listened to again and this, coupled with the transcript, was used to provide an overview of notes for each of the participants which outlined my interpretation of their views. At the end of each set of notes, the participants were given an overview of the themes that were emerging from their data set. This was then returned to each participant for respondent validation where they were asked to comment on my interpretation of their views and add any further clarification or ideas as they deemed appropriate. The themes emerging from the in-depth interviews were then cross referenced and compared to the themes emerging from other sources of data.

The extra below illustrates a final summary of the emerging themes as presented to one participant for respondent validation (refer to appendix 8 for more examples).

EMERGING THEMES

- **CLASSROOM ORGANISATION** – Believes that the classroom needs to be structured in a way that allows the children to work independently. This involves creating a safe structure that allows free access to resources in an organised way.
- **APPROACH TO LEARNING** – Describes this as something that is best introduced across the year so that the children encounter learning experiences that enable them to be independent when they greet open inquiry units. Believes that children's questioning skills need to be a focus to enable them to progress to deeper thinking. Feels very positive that, as the children become more effective inquirers, this has a positive impact on their approach to learning more generally. Suggests that skills need to be explicit.
- **MOTIVATION** – Suggests that inquiry learning positively motivated the children because they are able to direct their own learning and exercise

greater choice. Identifies greater perseverance among learners when an inquiry approach is adopted.

- **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT** – Sees inquiry learning as having a positive impact on the children's ability to work collaboratively with others. Believes that this supports in others areas. Believes that unplanned and undirected social time in extremely important in developing children's life skills. Believes that over directing all of children's time is negative and can impair their social development.
- **ROLE OF TEACHER** – Sees this as one which facilitates the child through the journey that they have chosen for themselves. Suggests that the adults need to set expectations at the outset and plan learning opportunities that will assist the child on their learning journey. Believes that the success of this is down to the creativity of the teacher. Personally feels very motivated and comfortable working in this way.

(5) Focused Observations

One aspect of data collection that provided an on- going kind of formative source of information was the focused observations. Suggesting the need for all researchers to develop the capacity to see their research topic with 'new and different lenses', Clough & Nutbrown (2012, p54)) describe observation as 'looking' - "looking critically, looking openly, looking sometimes knowing what we are looking for, looking for evidence, looking to be persuaded, looking for information." The authors also stress the importance of clarity and clear reference to the research agenda to justifying why observation is used as a method. Observations were conducted periodically throughout the research and were intended to collect data regarding the children's learning behaviours and response to changes in the curriculum. The periodic nature of these observations also provided an opportunity to follow up and consider classroom specific issues as they emerged.

The synergy between being a leader and a researcher is possibly exemplified by the inclusion of this research tool. It has been argued that action research should essentially be about improving practice rather than as a means of increasing knowledge about education (Elliot, 1991). As a leader, responsible for the educational opportunities of very young and vulnerable children, I have never felt this so intensely as when conducting this research project. In earlier chapters I discussed the importance of this research in enhancing learning opportunities and standards for children within my school. Faced with the initial possibility of throwing our school curriculum into disarray through inquiry and possibly compromising standards, the importance of observing the consequences of my leadership action in the children's learning context was paramount. I now have great personal clarity on the issue of practice versus knowledge. As a researcher, I wish to increase general knowledge about education, but only, if at first, this knowledge improves practice.

Focused observations are, essentially, a form of non-participant observation. I use the term non-participant 'loosely' in this context in the sense that it is very

difficult to locate yourself in a room full of children (who you are well known to), and avoid being invited to participate in some way. Additionally, the very presence of an additional adult in a classroom will alter the dynamic in some way. I do not begin with the supposition that observation data can be objective and acknowledge the subjectivity of this process. I also recognise that working as an 'insider' can be beneficial in helping to illuminate the research question because I entered into the research context with a prior depth of understanding regarding the children's 'usual' responses within the classroom. This was helpful when making comparative judgements or noting any changes. In the context of this research, I therefore use the term 'non participant observation' to imply that when collecting data as part of this research project, it was my intention to refrain from any intervention within the classroom and simply note the flow of events and children's behaviours within the context. The observations were focused to enable me to attend, more specifically, to matters that related to the research question (Denzin, 1989).

Early on in the research project, I conducted a workshop with the teaching staff to establish which areas we would pin point as part of our focused observations. The generic focus areas that we decided upon were borne out of: our aims for developing an inquiry curriculum, concerns that were expressed about the possible impact of inquiry on children's learning behaviours and our school commitment to children's capacity to reflect on their learning. In this respect, we did not enter into observation as if it were 'flat', we pre-determined areas that were likely to be relevant to the development of inquiry. The observational strategy therefore tended to be focused on identifying possible problems or issues confronting the children (Wolcott, 1994) as well as acknowledging their existing strengths. The areas decided to focus the observations included: contextual information, relationship with others, approach to learning, motivation, communication and reflection and evaluation. We also identified a set of skills that we believed to be important to inquiry and learning more generally. From this, I developed an observation schedule to pilot.

The piloting process was never more crucial to the eventual methods employed as with the focused observations. On a first trail, it soon became apparent that an emerging inquiry classroom was nothing like any of us had ever seen in our recent professional experience (well at least not within a school that was functioning well anyhow). The children were brimming with enthusiasm but had not yet acquired the skills and attitudes to organise their learning and the adults had not developed the skills to scaffold the inquiry process. There were excited (but purposeful) children in every available space in the classroom, resources everywhere and a fluid movement of children around the learning context. It was very clear that inquiry was not about to happen in that 'differentiated table' fashion that had become so familiar to many settings; the 'penguin group', 'the bears' and 'the beavers' were all about to mix it up a little. It very quickly became apparent that my original intention of tracking groups of would not work – what was I thinking! The point that observation, for the purpose of research, is very different to the daily observations that we make was certainly prevalent in

the early stages of this research; the need to be systematic and planned in observing became evident very quickly (Opie, 2004).

As a consequence of the piloting process, I elected to track lead pupils. Four children were identified by their teachers, two boys and two girls from each of the seven classes within the school from reception class (age 4) to year 6 (age 11). Teachers were asked to select a pupil from each of the attainment ability bands for the core areas of English and mathematics (below average, average, above average) and one pupil who was identified as having low levels of motivation (irrespective of attainment). For ethical reasons, informed consent was sought from all pupils identified as lead pupils. Permission was sought from the purposive sample of 28 children and their parents (refer to appendix 9) so that they were aware that their learning behaviours and responses in class were being observed. The children were also given a box file and asked to collect any pieces of inquiry work that they felt pleased with. The focused observation schedule was then developed to focus observation upon the activities of the 'lead children', and those in the immediate vicinity of them, for a period of 10 minutes irrespective of where they were located within the school or classroom. The presence of specific skills and attitudes were noted as they were observed rather than the frequency of these. The observations were recorded as descriptions of events, children's behaviour and activities, and they often included brief reconstructions of conversations (Cohen et al 2000).

Whether or not the lesson was observed was left to the discretion of the teachers. All observation as part of this research was on a voluntary basis. All of the teachers agreed to be observed on at least one of the three occasions that the observations were scheduled. This agreement seemed to be primarily on the basis that they wanted feedback to help them to develop their practice. If a teacher did not volunteer to be observed within an observation cycle, by indicating this on the observation timetable in the staffroom, then the class was not observed.

Following an initial trial and agreement session, the class teachers were also invited to observe alongside myself within the context of the lesson. This provided an opportunity to triangulate data and discuss findings. Many of the teachers initially agreed to observe the children but eventually found that, trying to avoid interfering with the events in the classroom was very difficult. To avoid the teachers feeling overly threatened or self- conscious in the early implementation of inquiry, I confined observations to their own class. I wanted the teachers to be clear that the focus was the children and not them, particularly as they has expressed that inquiry challenged their professional identity. Retrospectively, I think that it would have been beneficial for the teachers to observe one another's classes right from the outset (a practice that we have now integrated into professional development using a modified observation schedule). This would have also strengthened the validation exercise. In hindsight, and as a consequence of the knowledge gained from this research, I would have spent more time in establishing the professional climate

to prepare the teachers for peer and paired observations. This is something that they were already familiar with for established curriculum areas but not when trialling something new. Lessons learned! To ensure that I was validating my observations when acting as a loan researcher, I spoke to the teachers about the observations that I had made.

Once the data was collected it was analysed in a number of ways. The occurrence of skills and attitudes was analysed and referenced to field notes. This was useful in helping to establish the kinds of behaviours that were evident or developing, and those which the teachers needed to focus on in practice to facilitate (see appendix 10 for an example). The observation records were then transcribed into the focus categories of relationships, approach to learning, motivation, communication and reflection & evaluation. At the first stage of analysis, the observations of the children of different abilities were identified to compare any difference that may have occurred. At the next stage of analysis, interpretative methods were used to identify emerging themes within each data set. For the third stage of analysis, all of the information was analysed across the data set to identify key themes and finally, this was compared across all other sets of data to consider the key findings.

(6) Ethical Concerns

"Others speak **on** their behalf: they speak **for** them, they speak **about** them, but they rarely speak **with** them." (Groundwater-Smith, 2007, p114)

I open my discussion about ethics with a focus on children because they provided impetus for this research. I have also learned so much about my own leadership (also including aspects that left me feeling disappointed in myself as a leader) by affording time to really listen and talk to them. I also hope that consulting with children helped to develop their sense of belonging, respect, self-worth and self-identity as learners (Research Briefing, 2003). Ethical concerns were integrated into the research design as discussed throughout sections within this chapter. However, ethics are so crucial, particularly when working as a practitioner researcher where the opportunity to misused power and authority is prevalent, that I feel the necessity to discuss ethical issues specifically.

As previously discussed, power dynamics are an important consideration when working with children; it requires sensitivity and attention to ethical concerns (Leeson, 2007). When engaged in research that involves children, it is important to avoid manipulating or coercing them (Groundwater-Smith, 2007). Through my own journey from childhood into adulthood, I have always judged the trustworthiness and integrity of a character by the way that they treat the most vulnerable in society – animals and children. It also seems to me that if a person is careless about their actions towards accomplished adults, what are they capable of when presented with those who are less proficient in self-protection? The latter is a leadership concern that I take very seriously when dealing with personality types who are disrespectful to those whom they perceive as having

less authority than themselves. It is this conviction that I bring to my approach to ethics as a researcher. It is a sincerely held belief, although informed by theoretical literature, is not dependent upon it for guidance. As Pring (2000, p52) states, "It may be more important, from an ethical point of view, to consider much more carefully the virtues of the researcher than the principles he or she espouses." This research was deontological in every respect; the preservation of the rights of all participants was paramount at every stage of the research process. The ethical concerns that are pertinent to working with children were extended to all participants and guided my practice as a researcher throughout.

To secure the active, willing, non- passive and truly participatory inclusion of others, all people took part in this research on a voluntary basis. This began by seeking the approval of the school's board of governors from the outset. I have also reported annually on the progress of inquiry learning to the governing body. Relying on voluntary participation is in keeping with the traditions of participatory research (Stringer, 2007) and also helped to moderate any possibility of coercion due to the dual role presented by being a Head Teacher practitioner researcher (Anderson et al 2007). We are reminded that transparency, consent and confidentiality are required for ethical enactment within research (Mockler, 2007). In view of this, consent was sought from all participants (and their parents if under eighteen) and contributors had the right to leave the research process at any point; they were regularly reminded of this. Confidentiality has been assured throughout by ensuring that recorded responses are anonymous and by using pseudonyms when reporting dialogue. In reporting dialogue, the actual words used by the participants have been cited. This is in pursuit of the truth and an attempt to create trustworthy outcomes (Busher, 2002); it is also about representing the truth of young people so that the children's voice is given direct expression and they can tell their story to infer meaning (Leitch, 2008).

Taking an ethical approach to research is not solely related to the manner in which research participants are treated but also the procedures that are followed with regard to contexts, analysis of data and the dissemination of information (Busher, 2002). I have previously discussed the ontological and epistemological stance that I bring to this research which most aptly described as a constructivist perspective. Throughout this research process, I have attended to reflexivity by heightening my awareness of how my personal and professional identity has determined my position as a researcher. I have also found a combination of journaling and educative and supportive supervision (Fox et al, 2007) to be instrumental in facilitating my understanding of how my relationship to research participants and the professional context of the research has led to the construction of knowledge. In this respect, I feel that I am able to ethically represent the views of the participants in this research.

Although respondent validation was used to confirm my analysis and interpretation of the data, retrospectively I would also have also included a

greater emphasis upon 'critical friendship' to enhance reflexivity (Campbell et al, 2004). The notion of engaging a wider community of professionals to challenge interpretations can not only enhance the dependability of interpretation, it may also help to alleviate the feeling of isolation that can be experienced as a lone researcher. At the outset of this research, I, possibly naively, felt uncomfortable and a little selfish taking others time to advance my educational journey with a further qualification- on personal ethical grounds, it made me feel uncomfortable. Had this research not been part of doctoral study and my own potential career advancement, I would have most certainly actively engaged others time in critical review. Having been thoroughly entrenched in practitioner research, I now understand how this can facilitate other practitioners' professional development and, in this sense, prove to be directly beneficial for them. I would most certainly make it a prominent feature of any future research that I undertake.

Saunders (2007) discussed the widely contested distinctions between the values of research and professionalism and the dichotomy often depicted between academic and practitioner research. She highlights the importance of being explicit about the values underpinning teaching and research and a clarity around which forms of professional learning are integral to the development of professional knowledge. In her use of the description 'discourse of research as pedagogy', Saunders (2007, p72) aptly describes the contribution that this research is intended to make to knowledge as it is clearly dependent on 'deliberation and the exercise of professional or expert judgement'. The conception of knowledge, in this sense, is generative, meaningful and intended to influence practice.

The aim of this research, therefore, is not to derive statements that can be generalised in the positivistic sense; rather, to improve contextual practice and to illuminate or suggest practice for other contexts who might adapt professional knowledge to new situation (Pring, 2000). For this reason the internal and external contexts outlined in chapter one and are intended to strengthen what Guba and Lincoln term 'fittingness' (Schofield, 2002). The research undertaken was also systematic and the analysis rigorous. Trustworthiness and credibility can be regarded as holistic indicators of good research (Scaife, 2004). The components of what can be understood by some to be 'internal validity' are, in qualitative research terms, suggested to be credibility, transferability, dependability and confirm-ability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The trustworthiness of this research is derived from the thoroughness of the analysis and the process is open to public scrutiny to secure the integrity and plausibility of the findings (stringer, 2007). Thus, the inclusion of transcript materials and journals etc. (refer to appendices) strengthen the dependability and credibility of this research. Data from four different sources was rigorously and systematically analysed, cross referenced and compared, to secure the trustworthiness of the analysis and interpretation leading to emerging themes. Respondent validation was also implemented to facilitate accurate interpretation of participants' voice. The focus groups interviews proved to be a highly effective formative method of

revisiting or confirming views that emerged from adult participants throughout the course of this research. Lesson observation and journaling also provided formative information from data analysis that added clarity to the views and behaviours of the children. Retrospectively, I would also have included some kind of on-going focus group discussions with the children. This would not only have provided an additional data source to triangulate across data sets, it would have created an opportunity to consider the children's view across a longer period of time and check their view from two different sources.

Favouring an interpretative approach to educational research, I would uphold the notion that the person of the researcher is always evident in all aspects of the research process, design, data collection analysis, interpretation and reporting (Goodson, 2003). I have not attempted to remain neutral throughout this research process because I do not believe that this is possible. As a practitioner action researcher, I have been concerned with the inter-subjectivity and have attempted to gain an insight into collective meaning, which has in turn informed leadership action.

I have been very overt in emphasising that the main purpose of posing my research question was to enhance curriculum provision, curriculum opportunities and standards for the children. In order to achieve this, I began with the supposition that inquiry learning is something of value and has supremacy over other kinds of approaches. To avoid any decline in the quality of education offered to the children, through rigorous regular and systematic data collection and rigor in analysis, I carefully monitored the progress of any action or intervention taken as part of my developing professional understanding. In this sense, I was able to act ethically as a researcher and swiftly reconsider any action to avoid adverse consequences for the children (Kelly, 1989).

Issues Surrounding Informed Consent

Very recently, I was engaged in an informal discussion with a respected colleague whom I have worked alongside for many years. In relaying my concerns, and possible doubts regarding my judgement, (about a school setting I recently visited) my colleague kindly assured me that I knew what I was doing and to trust my initial judgement. She went on to express her views about my leadership of curriculum change. From recent memory, her conversation went something like this. "I'll be honest, I thought what is she doing, what more does she want, but look at us now, we don't even have to think about inquiry as it's just part of what we are doing and it's better for the children. You know what you are doing, your leadership has made this school what it is". I strongly value my colleagues view point and felt assured by her affirmation of my leadership. However, what this unprompted exchange does high light is the lasting impression that the change process evoked. Four years on, this teacher still remembers how she felt at the

outset of this research process; a process where the impetus for change was essentially externally imposed by me.

As I have previously argued, there is great potential for practitioner research to yield rich data that might otherwise not be accessible through other methods. In order to explore the research issue, it was necessary for me to conduct the research within my own school. However, researching within one's own organisation can be problematic in respect of securing informed consent from participants. As the above exchange illustrates, despite her initial reservations, my colleague did agree to participate in the research. This may have been through curiosity; it may have been because she trusted my leadership or it might be attributed to other factors. What is important to acknowledge, however, is that she may have elected to participate simply because she felt that there was no alternative course of action. As the most senior person within the school, in leading this research project, power differentials will inevitably be a consideration that may determine staffs' willingness to exercise their right decline participation in the research process. This is important to acknowledge.

In discussing the principles underpinning leadership, and the benefits of looking at the behaviour of 'followers' instead of leaders, Covey (1992) proposes three types of power relationships to account for why people choose to follow leaders. Covey (1992) suggests that followers may follow out of fear of what will happen if they do not do as requested. This can be understood as coercive power where compliance is driven by fear of reprisal or the loss of something good. A second interpretation is 'utility power' where response is reliant on perceived benefits; it is therefore assumed that following is premised on the belief that the leader has something to offer the follower. A final level of response is understood to be premised on trust, respect and honour and the notion that some people have power because others believe in them and what they are trying to accomplish. In this analysis, people follow because they choose to; Covey (1992) describes this as legitimate power.

Engaging in practitioner action research assumes that the practitioner is a subject within the research process - an insider in the setting. It can be argued that the researcher and the practitioner are one in the same (Anderson et al, 2007). As a leader within the school, I occupied a set of complex roles that contribute to my positionality within the research. This not only defined the lens through which I viewed reality and thus my interpretation of data, it also determined the dynamic of the power relations that existed between my-self and the staff. My positionality within the school was an integral component of this research. For ethical concerns, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of my dual role and prevailing power dynamics that will inevitably have influenced

the course of this research. As a leader, I would like to attribute the reason why others choose follow me to legitimate power (Covey, 1992). I would also extend this to others' choice to participate in the research as well. This is what I strive to achieve. However, I must also justly acknowledge that staff may have elected to follow me because they felt coerced or for reasons premised on utility power (Covey, 1992). As the role of leadership and researcher are intertwined, similarly, staff may also have elected to participate in the research process for the latter two reasons.

Early on in the research process, my journals make reference to my own reservations about the dual role as a researcher and a Head Teacher. As an entry for February 2009 indicates:

I sent off my Head's Report to Governors via email in which I included information about my research. I am seeking their approval for the research at our next meeting. I always feel uncomfortable asking for something for myself. It draws out the difficulties for me between being a researcher and a Head Teacher.

I was clearly experiencing a degree of challenge regarding my role and involvement in the research process. It might be expected therefore that it is highly likely that the teachers were experiencing something similar in relation to their role and the existing dynamics that had already been established within our professional relationship. As drawn out in more detail in chapter four, I was surprised at the level of fear that some of the teachers initially experienced at the prospect of being involved in a research project. Eventually, all of the teaching staff elected to participate in the research but some were initially reluctant as the following journal extract written in May 2009 illustrates:

The teachers were more passive than usual during the training. This may be because they do not feel on firm footing. I will need to pursue this further via interviews. Jessica seems thoroughly bored. This is often her response when she feels challenged beyond her perceived capability; she literally switches off and refuses to take in any more information. When managed well, she is extremely competent and effective but gets overly anxious when presented with something that she doesn't have control of. This will be challenging for me as a leader because I wish to develop her as a competent teacher. The professional leader in me can rationalise a negative response but the personal just thinks – can't you just get on with it. This will be a challenge for me as Jessica is the only staff member not to respond in any way to the invitation to participate in the research. One thing that I am learning about throughout this process is how important it is to leave the personal 'at the door'. It's important to be passionate about your vision as a leader but to avoid being personal about others response to it. I will need to reflect further on this.

This journal extract explores the initial leadership dilemmas that my dual role presented. What is clear from this source is that, at the time of writing, I am

focussed on my response to Jessica's reluctance to engage in the journey that I had determined for our school. While this aspect of the journal is no doubt useful for considering the processes necessary for self- management in leadership and possible routes to engaging others in a vision, it does raise issues about the capacity of teachers to exercise total autonomy in consenting to participate in practitioner research for change. Jessica was overt in raising concerns about her fears in response to curriculum change. I suspect that in the early phases of the project she elected to participate because she could see that the change process was gathering momentum. I had established a personal and professional view that inquiry was of value and was enacting this principle through leadership action. The research was not about whether or not inquiry learning was a good thing; it was essentially about defining a course of action that ensured effective implementation. As discussed in chapter one, this is not dissimilar to the pattern of how prevailing external contexts subject teachers to change, it can readily be argued that, often, there is little opportunity to resist.

Thankfully, Jessica evolved into an excellent inquiry practitioner and, from personal interest, developed a creative school project. However, from an ethical stance, it is important to acknowledge that it does raise the question as to whether teachers are totally free to decline to participate in research projects that are conducted within their own setting; particularly if the impetus for change is being driven by senior leadership.

Evans (1998) highlights the importance of school leadership in determining teachers' attitudes towards their work. While strong interpersonal leadership skills alone are insufficient to secure leadership credibility, weak interpersonal skills were associated with negative job related attitudes among staff. This suggests that the behaviours of leaders can significantly shape the culture of a school. A key point here is that in shaping the culture of an organisation, is it important for leaders to retain an awareness of how action can shape culture. Deal and Peterson (2009) make the pertinent point that toxic cultures possess the same elements as positive ones so the values, rituals, stories, traditions and the network of cultural players can take on a negative variance instead of a positive one. In some cases, to maintain an ethical approach to research, it is important to remain reflexive about the expectations that are placed upon staff and the kind of messages that they receive as part of general leadership practice, either explicit or implicit. While it may not be possible to precisely determine the extent to which power differentials will impact on people's right to choose to participate the overt pressure that they feel to conform can be reduced if the research process is handled as ethically as possible. If the operational mode of leadership cultivates a 'do as I say' ethos then an authentic opportunity to decline participation is clearly reduced. Equally however, the power differential

that is bestowed on leaders simply by virtue of their role must necessarily be considered if ethical principles are to be upheld.

Similarly, as noted by Roth (2007), there is a need to be mindful when there are additional concerns other than the quality of improvement on the research agenda. Students may feel coerced into participating depending on the question being asked or who is asking it. Children and their parents may feel obliged to agree to participation in research because the Head of their school is asking them to. To ensure that consent is given as freely as possible, opportunities for potential participants to decline involvement needs to be authentic and clear parameters for involvement identified and integrated within the research design. Consent forms (appendix 1) and clear explanations pertaining to participation (appendix 3) can facilitate in respect of this.

In discussing the notion of informed consent, Anderson et al (2007) high light the importance of seeing interactions around a person's willingness to participate in the action research process as on going. Rather than assuming that consent is static and secured at the outset of the research, as in traditional research models, the authors propose that participants are continuously kept informed about how research is evolving and what they might anticipate in the future. In this respect, participation is part of the evolving research relationship that, due to the continuous information imparted, secures informed consent throughout (Anderson et al, 2007). I attempted to integrate this principle into my research. I scheduled opportunities for focus group discussion and interviews during directed school hours (as a means of encouraging participation due to staffs' other commitments) but always noted on the information board, prior to each meeting, that attendance was optional; this was also explicit on the meeting schedules that were distributed. In order to ensure that adult participants were kept informed about emerging issues, copies of analysis notes were distributed following focus groups discussions and individual interviews. This also supported respondent validation.

At each meeting with the children, I always reminded them that their participation was voluntary and that they could leave at any time during the meeting. At the beginning of each set of interviews, I provided a brief verbal recap of what I understood to be my understanding of the key issues that they were raising. I also closed each group interview session with an overview of where we were going next with the research and what the children's role in this would be. The pupil prompts (appendix 4) facilitated this process. These actions were certainly no guarantee that the participants genuinely felt that they could leave the research process but it was an authentic attempt to reassure them that they could and was backed by sincere intentions. However, it needs to be

acknowledged that it would take an extremely confident and assured child, in particular, to decide on a course of actions that might be perceived as displeasing a 'powerful' adult. It is more likely that, had the children wished to discontinue their involvement, they would have been absent of the planned research days or engaged their parents in negotiations. This did not occur.

It is useful to consider the moral principles underpinning the ethics of research. Defining morals as the 'right or wrong' of ethics (the rules of conduct), Pring (2000) offers an illuminating perspective on the principles of action (that which one ought to do) and the principles of the researcher and the dispositions and character that one appeals to in justifying a chosen course of action. From my own experience of research, it seems to me that the character and dispositions of the researcher are particularly important when researching as an insider. It is difficult to alter power differentials and how existing relationships may exert pressure on others to participate; my ontological stance leads me to understand that nothing is free from the individual interpretations and social constructions of others. However, it is possible to challenge one's own values and examine the principles which govern the research. As Pring (2000, p145) argues "The researcher is caught up in a process of deliberation which is often not recognised for the complex moral and practical debate that it is." I was aware that my key driving principles were to secure respect, justice and fairness within the children's learning journey. However, I also needed to be aware of not compromising the respect, justice and fairness of the adults in order to uphold these principles. This remained a delicate balance which required continuous self-management and awareness of how one's my own actions may have colluded to exert unnecessary pressure on others to participate. I have addressed the views of the participants extensively in chapters five and six. I know from my analysis that the participating in the change process was challenging for some people. Retrospectively, it would have also enhanced ethical practice to explore the issues linked to informed consent as an integral aspect of the data collection process. This may have helped to affirm to participants that informed consent was an on- going concern.

Also, with regard to self- management and presentation of self as a leader and a researcher, I attempted to support staffs' sense of agency by overtly identifying my own fallibility and willingness to engage in self- critique. I did, and continue to do so, recognise that I and my leadership are evolving entities. As Leithwood and Beatty (2008, p59) describe it "Teachers who know that they are allowed to be imperfect works-in-progress can afford to engage in bold self-critique, especially if they are fully aware that the principal sees herself in this way too. The role of the leader in setting the scene for continuous improvement is a powerful one that depends on strengthening beliefs, such as self-efficacy, among

teachers." I would argue that the same of true of practitioner action research. If teachers genuinely feel that they are of value and the context in which they operate is conducive to enabling an authentic freedom to choose, then it is more likely that the consent that they give will be informed. The same is true of children. It is, however, a delicate balance.

The following chapters are my attempt to capture and communicate the most pertinent elements of this inquiry. I hope that it illuminates our understanding of leading curriculum change. I will employ the words of one of the eight year old participants (when asked in an interview if there are any things that they find difficult about inquiry) to describe, in part, my personal writing journey through the important task of communicating practitioner research.

"Well, I think it's quite hard presenting it at the end. You don't know what to say and you might be a bit scared to do it. It's a bit hard, if you are on pen you could make a mistake and you can't rub it out."

Thanks heavens for computer technology!

An overview of Methods

RESEARCH TOOL	PURPOSE	FORMAT	DATA GENERATED
Reflective Journal	To make personal reflections on decisions made as a Head teacher, direction setting note influences, Reflections on national expectations determining change, tensions and dilemmas, reflective thinking, ideas, concerns, own feelings, perceived response from others etc.	Types notes made on a fortnightly basis with a particular focus on matters relating to curriculum development and my leadership of this. Ad hock handwritten reflections were also kept in a journal.	39 separate typed and dated journals. Two hand written journals. Views validated through discussion with a 'critical friend'.
Focus Group Discussions with teaching and learning support staff. (The aim of this is to try and capture the views of people who feel less inclined to participate in an individual interview). (Up to 90 minutes)	To ascertain the views of teachers and support staff about ideas for change and the impact of initiatives on school and classroom organisation, general working habits, perceived response of pupils, time management, planning for learning and evolving views about change etc.	Voluntary attendance. Field notes taken. For logistical reasons separate sessions were offered to teachers and learning support staff. Written feedback provided for participants following each session.	10 focus group audio recorded discussions. Responded validation provided in the form of written analysis overview notes distributed and discussed at the beginning of each new focus group discussion.
Group Interviews with pupils facilitated by photo-elicitation techniques. (Up to 60 minutes)	To access pupil voice regarding their views about units of learning, experience of teaching and learning through inquiry.	Voluntary participation of pupils by invitation. To comprise of 6 children from each of the year groups 3, 4, 5 and 6. Flyer and Power Point presentation.	Three 45-60 minute interviews with each Key Stage 2 year group participants. Generating 12 recorded group interviews. Respondent validation conducted when children gathering their views to present ideas to others.
Semi-structured interviews. (45-90 minutes)	To explore how participants views change in relation to their professional practice. Also to explore issues related to personal and professional development needs.	Audio taped individual interviews with teachers and learning support staff.	10 recorded and transcribed interviews. Respondent validation through written overview of analysis.
Focused Observations (30 minutes)	To note the learning behaviours of the children while they are engaged in child initiated enquiry.	Paired observations with class teachers when possible. Use of an observation schedule.	19 observations. Inquiry behaviours analysed. Patterns in observations analysed and noted. Validation through notes/discussion with teacher.

Chapter 4 – Journals of a Headteacher

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the journey through leading change. Drawing on personal journals and focus group discussions, which ran over an extended period of time, some of the contextual and external issues that emerged throughout the change process are addressed. Leadership actions that helped to manage planned and unplanned events and steer the path of curriculum change are also discussed. This chapter does not chart a linear path to successful curriculum change; it explores the realities of leadership and how the best laid strategies and plans can be subject to extreme challenge; this includes the 'resistance' of others and the everyday practical demands of working in a school. Aspects of the 'leadership of self' are also discussed throughout this chapter and how successfully managing one's own emotions, and responses to challenging events, significantly contributes to the effective leadership of others.

Launching the Project – Sink or Swim

Early on in the new academic year, I used one of our five allotted inset days to launch my intended plans for our new curriculum. This was against the backdrop of the anticipated national changes previously discussed in Chapter One. Our periodic and weekly training was always carefully mapped out in response to previous evaluations and was generally upbeat and well received by the staff; many of whom were familiar with leading training session themselves. An implicit leadership objective had always been to establish a respectful culture around giving and receiving training, where people were listened to and their views considered, even if they were eventually deemed to be unsuitable to guide practice. Whilst staff did not always enter our team with this understanding, peer modelling and gentle (or explicit if required) coaching soon secured their initiation into our school way of doing things. We laughingly joke about it now, when combined with other factors, as the 'school (name) stamp'. This helped to establish a culture where all members of staff, irrespective of experience, could muster up the courage to stand in front of their colleagues and feel safe in the knowledge that they would be respectfully received.

Phew! On this day, I felt personally comforted by the fact that I would also benefit from the anticipated reasonableness of my colleagues. Based on the premise that, for new learning to take place, one has to be motivated and emotionally engage with the material, I needed to keep the teachers on board and did not wish to fall at the first hurdle. Many of them were already deemed successful practitioners by the 'powers that be'; why would they want to

change? To my relief, this day was no exception – the teachers brought good humour and enthusiasm to the tasks that I had presented them with, perhaps unaware of the challenges that lay ahead. On reflection, and something that I believe acted in my leadership interests when greater challenges confronted us, I was fortunate in the sense that I had already explicitly established a way of working that demonstrated selectivity. I was adverse to unquestioningly accepting the three hundred plus new DFE initiatives over the previous seven years and had shelved many of them only accepting the few into practice that were suitable for our children and the way that we choose to work. In this respect, I feel that we had not had our spirits quashed by a barrage of, well intended but, professionally confusing ideas.

Using the latest interactive technology, which eluded me as a classroom teacher, I presented my vision for a new curriculum; one which allowed us to investigate the view of learners so that they could contribute to the development of a new curriculum and associated practices. A curriculum which reflected individual interests and learning preferences of the children and would be responsive to their changing needs. Providing an open workshop forum to generate ideas, I asked the teachers to develop tools to access children's views about what they want to learn about and the kind of things that helps them to learn. The teachers elected to work in key stages to explore ideas and initially developed a number of imaginative ways to access children's views. At Key Stage One these included a traffic light sticker system linked to different ways of learning so that the children could evaluate what helps them to learn; a learning board expanded from the notion of 'show and tell' where the children bring in items from home and make comments to be pinned on the board; annotated pupil evaluations and a home journal cataloguing things children would like to learn about. At Key Stage 2, the teachers initially elected to use our fledgling learning platform as a blog where the children had the opportunity to write an on-going diary of comments about areas of interest; use of interactive pads to respond to questions about what helps them to learn; creating a mind map collage which was then used for discussion about the kinds of things that interest them and making video commentaries to express their views about learning. Across a six week period, these tools were trailed by the teachers to give them an insight into the children's interests and how they believe that they learn best.

Leading the Curriculum

Since this time we have integrated learning days into the curriculum which provide us the opportunity to have a whole school focus on pupil voice activities linked to learning and allow the children to reflect on different needs and possible approaches that may be of assistance to them. More specifically

however, we have attempted to integrate pupil voice activities into our practice more generally by encouraging continuous reflection through learning journals. It was initially important to develop children's thinking by coaching them about possible used for the journals and ways to capture ideas. This journaling practice has more recently been transferred to children's 'work books' generally and, not only includes a reflection on progress and next steps but increasingly, on what it was that helped the child to learn – the actual process itself. This allows teachers almost immediate access into the learning process as perceived by the children. All aspect of the reflection on learning process needs constant revisiting, not only to accommodate the needs of a changing staff profile but also to keep it at the forefront of teachers minds and to continue to develop metacognition with the children. One of the challenges that this presents is that the teachers and support staff have to engage with the process themselves and recognise the validity prior to them being prepared to reinforce it with the children. In my experience, reflection of practice is not a strength that teachers enter the profession with; neither is it a strong enough component throughout the training for teaching process.

We began our journey through the change process by restructuring our curriculum. We had previously blocked the curriculum as units into themes and identified discreet subjects. This had previously created a scaffold to secure rising standards across different subject areas and allowed some measure of cross curricular learning. It also ensured that the curriculum could accommodate staff changes by quickly informing new teachers what areas of learning the children would be familiar with. As a teacher and a leader I have always tended to favour a holistic overview of the curriculum; not one that hinders creative development but one that avoids unnecessary repetition. School can be transient organisations and, to protect the interests and entitlement of the children, the curriculum needs to reflect this. There was a general agreement among the staff that our themes were tired and not reflective of the children's current interests. Using the voice data that we had previously generated, we developed more contemporary child led themes covering a six to eight week period. At this point, we also introduced open choice units intended to extend across a term (a period of 6-8 weeks). This was intended to allow the children to use their inquiry skills to pursue their own curriculum interests. We also began to erode some the boundaries that exist between subjects of the National Curriculum, (certainly with regards to the knowledge component as many skills and attitudes over- lap) by combining Humanities, Creative & Performing Arts and Science and Technology.

There has always been some tension in my practice about completely eroding the boundaries between different subject areas. I am never too sure whether

this is due to the contextual situation in which I have always worked, as discussed in Chapter One, or whether I am concerned about provision for talented learners; perhaps a bit of both. A high degree of depth is required to develop a talent and this can be achieved more readily through discrete teaching (or very skilled cross curricular inquiry learning perhaps). When we were professionally ready, it was always my intention to move our curriculum towards open child led study units and to work with a combination of thematic and discrete teaching so that, at times, we can hone in on particular subject specific skills. Child led units may have been possible with the anticipated changes to the National Curriculum planned for 2011. However a change of government at this crucial point, with a contrasting ideology, means that I, once again, find myself leading in a time of uncertainty. As a leader of a community state school, I have to recognise that our practice will be judged against a set of prescriptive criteria that tends to favour knowledge driven, subject based teaching. At this point therefore, I have delayed my ultimate objective. For now, we still work to a combination of thematic and discrete subject teaching units that are not knowledge driven but underpinned by a focus on inquiry competencies and attitudes. Changing our themes to reflect the interest of the children not only generated a more vibrant context for learning, it also regenerated the interest of the adults.

Leading a Personal Learning Journey

At this early point in the project, I had intentionally limited my personal knowledge of what an inquiry curriculum was 'supposed to look like'. There are some international examples of inquiry models that could have provided a basis for our work that I could have simply lifted integrated into our practice. It was not until a much later date, (perhaps two years later) that I explored some of these to compare with our own emerging model. My rational was to avoid an approach where I was providing a supposedly ready- made solution; I believe that there is already too much of this imposed upon the teaching profession from external sources. I wanted this project to truly reflect the voice of practitioners and children alike, so that this was reflected in the model that we eventually developed.

To avoid the temptation to revert to entirely solution focused leadership, I limited my own capacity to provide a ready-made solution and found my own knowledge, experience and thinking developing alongside everyone else. As we encountered new challenges, through reading and training, I kept myself very slightly ahead – good risk management! (Just in case it was all about to fall apart). This is not dissimilar to the practice I had employed as a fulltime classroom teacher, where competing tasks and a vast curriculum meant that I

was often learning something new alongside the children. Many times I had noted that my teaching was more effective in progressing the children's learning when I was also immersed in the learning process. I had, through my own learning journey, been able to identify the children's thinking, challenges and misconceptions. Similarly, I found myself able to do the same in leading change. It was almost as though, through research, my perceptive skills and capacity to learn had become heightened. I did, however, find this exhausting and have had to develop personal management strategies that occasionally allow me to 'step away'. Having never really allowed myself any time way from the organisation to reflect, I now find that my very survival as a leader depends upon it.

Perhaps, if there are any rules to leadership, the first rule is that leading learning is simply about leading learning, whether it be children or adults. The process is similar because you are working with people and your personal thinking and practice needs to evolve in a similar way whoever you work with. I have always found it curious when I have observed that many people new to leadership go through a period of readjustment where they do not seem to identify themselves as a teacher anymore. It is as though their practice takes on a completely different dimension where they need to operate with a set of new leadership behaviours which have very little relevance to the classroom. Perhaps this may be exacerbated by the vast number of tasks that one encounters when they are new to senior leadership? It does tend to take some time to decipher an appropriate order of priority for these. I have always thought as senior leadership as the extension of the classroom, just on a bigger scale. To be honest, had it been anything else and had I required a whole new set of leadership behaviours, I doubt very much that I would have been any good at it. In my early stages as a Head Teacher, I would certainly have felt very intimidated by the prospect of leading a school where it may have been necessary to acquire a whole new set of leadership behaviours. Perhaps it was my inability to identify leadership as anything that is not related to the classroom, my limitation in this sense rather than some master design, which was later to serve me very well in leading an educational organisation. I would now confidently argue that it is only in the recognition that leadership of a school is, in essence, about the classroom and about extending effective classroom leadership behaviours, that Deputy Heads and Head Teachers eventually secure effective and sustainable leadership of a whole school.

I recently met another Head Teacher working on the latest Government initiative as a Local Leader of Education. In working collaboratively in support of another Head of a local school in an Ofsted category, we began to discuss our own leadership patterns. What struck me as remarkable are the similarities in our leadership behaviours. Both of us are currently running successful schools and it

appears that the degree of focus on instructional development is extremely evident in our practice; as are the values underpinning our leadership action. He confirmed this to me in an email following our meeting suggesting that he felt enthusiastic about working with a 'kindred spirit'. It confirmed to me that there must be something key to the instructional component of leadership that can be replicated in different settings.

Listening to Others to Lead Practice - An Emotional Response

As detailed in Chapter Three, a series of tools were designed to enable me to capture the views of the adults and children, so that these could inform my leadership practice and the ultimate direction that I steered the school in effecting curriculum change. Through training and discussion, I was very overt about my role and the kind of research that I would be undertaking. Similarly, I was explicit about feeding back information; the impact that this had on changing the school's professional culture is discussed in more detail elsewhere. One of the research tools that became very influential in guiding practice in a formative way was the focus group interview with the staff. These focused discussions provided a window into current views and created a vehicle for the teachers to raise concerns or to professionally debate issues. Another, personally reflective tool, journaling, provided me with an on-going mechanism for considering the work of the school more generally in relation to curriculum change and, of course, my emotions and thinking in relation to this. Both of these means of capturing information were highly influential in determining my immediate and longer term leadership action or, as my mentor describes it, '*redesigning the plane in mid-air'.*

Very early on in the project I had met with one of the school's middle leaders to discuss the role of ICT in inquiry learning. At this point, and in many informal and formal meetings scheduled later on, one to one discussion proved to be very influential in determining my practice. I was often able to discuss ideas more fully and could be easily assured of relatively unguarded responses in a one to one interpersonal discussion. That is not to say that people were less honest in a larger group situation, or were saying anything that they did not wish others to hear; it just provided a forum devoid of too many interpersonal dimensions and complexities. It also created an opportunity for others to set their own agenda for discussion; in the tight schedule of the school day, this is often a rarity. I now intentionally schedule one to one meetings outside professional development reviews, team meetings and the like, as part of my leadership practice. Aside from the many valuable points raised around the limitations of our ICT infrastructure, which later resulted in a large spend and a contemporary new system, my attention was also drawn to the likelihood that the way I was moving

the curriculum forward would require a change in mind-set for some practitioners including herself. It was this that was probably to present my leadership with the biggest challenge, in attempting to realise my ambition of a developing a curriculum and practice that was truly responsive to the children.

Along similar lines in relation to people's resistance, one of the things that genuinely surprised me was how initially threatening the teachers found the idea of participating in this research. I was also challenged by my own personal response to their reaction. As I note in May 2009:

'*It is interesting how people's choice not to participate is challenging, not as a leader or in a professional capacity, but in a personal way. I found it quite emotionally challenging not to feel disappointed or rejected if people elected not to participate. Even through, publically, I have presented my request for involvement in a very open and relaxed way so as not to make the potential participants feel coerced, I recognised that in doing this research, I am bringing a lot of my personal self into the work place; so that I can sleep at night, this is something I generally avoid. In my 'Head Teacher' persona, I have developed a kind of shell that has enabled me to avoid taking things too personally; I simply develop a strategy to deal with it. I am already recognising that my role as a Head Teacher and that of a researcher will present me with many challenges. I feel more vulnerable than usual and will need to develop a capacity to cope with this.'*

Had I not had the ultimate objective of wanting to complete a thesis, I may not have ordinarily persevered with this emotional discomfort; neither would I have insisted in placing my staff in a place that is clearly outside their personal and professional comfort zone. At this point, I was most certainly operating with my instinctive personal protective behaviours; ones that I had developed along the way to survive leadership. However, it was in pushing these boundaries that I learned a really positive lesson in leadership. This was confirmed to me later by many of the staff who had initially felt very uncomfortable about being involved and in challenging ourselves the quality of our practice significantly improved. Additionally, in the longer term, the quality of our professional communication has also improved.

Sometimes, the willingness to take a 'hard look' at the things that make us personally uncomfortable, a capacity to tolerate conflict, however it presents itself, will ultimately benefit us as professionals. In grappling with the challenges that being a teacher researcher presented for me, I have inadvertently developed my capacity as a social pedagogue. Consequently, from my own perspective as a Leader today, I now expect some things to make me feel emotionally uncomfortable. I am more willing and able to tolerate initial

discomfort so that I can develop more meaningful modes of communication or gain a more insightful understanding. This capacity to manage conflict, emotional or otherwise, now allows me to bring the *personal dimension* of the inner team to situations (Kleipoedszus, 2011). Because I am aware of the inner team that I bring to my professional work and acknowledge it as strengthening my leadership capacity, I am no longer threatened or afraid.

Despite some people's initial reluctance to participate in this research, almost all of the staff, at some point throughout the research, agreed to participate at some level. As the project progressed, it was evident that staff felt more confident in agreeing to take part. All of the teaching staff dropped in and out of the focus group discussions; many attending all. Similarly, many teachers agreed to one to one interviews and all staff, at some point, agreed to classroom observations. This highlighted the importance of providing opportunities to capture views at different levels and stages. This is not only important as a teacher researcher, but also in the role as a leader who is responsible for school self- evaluation. Due to obvious time pressures for competing tasks, there is a tendency for schools to schedule voice gathering activities on a rolling programme; my own practice previously mirrored this. I have now altered this to create a more responsive style of data gathering where adult and pupil voice is an integral part of our self –evaluation. Some staff training sessions are wholly focussed on engaging in professional dialogue similar to our focus group discussions. This is allowing me to gain an immediate insight into the views of others, and initiating action as required.

Bringing Issues into Focus and Leadership Response

The first, and subsequent, focus group discussions raised a number of issues that will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Six. However, it is relevant to the discussion here in that the methods of data collection (in the early phase of the project) and my reflective journaling, detailing staff's response, determined my leadership action. This facilitated the process of change. Much of the staff training was decided by the kinds of difficulties that the teachers were encountering, their personal concerns about inquiry teaching and the kinds of pupil responses that they were observing in the classroom. A fundamental concern of the teachers was their changing role and uncertainty about what an effective facilitator of inquiry looked like in practice and inquiry across different subject areas. Issues around planning and assessment emerged and concerns about a possibility in falling standards. There were also concerns about a possible increase in disruptive pupil behaviour, classroom organisation and difficulties that some children had in managing the inquiry process. Other issues gave rise to concerns about children's capacity to frame questions and think at

depth. These, and many more issues, were to shape our staff development programme over the next two years and determine how individual and whole school training was scheduled. Of course, in addition to this, general training needs, health and safety and other school priorities also had to be accommodated.

Some of the early training opportunities provided for teachers were about presenting possibilities for practice in developing inquiry. It became very clear that the teachers were very preoccupied by the standards agenda. Hardly surprising really, as they had grown to appreciate the kudos of working in a school where the children were very high attaining and begun to professionally identify themselves as teachers who delivered such standards. They had also possibly grown used to the overt accolades that this can bring but were also very mindful of the subtle pressures to maintain high standards - standard that were secured by rigorous and skilful teaching but not yet by fully engaging the children in the learning process. The children came along with us because they knew that we cared for and respected them; we had established a self- respecting, hard-working ethos where everyone expected the best of themselves. I also wanted the children to choose a path to learning because they felt inspired to learn. Of course, I also wanted to retain the high standards but felt that we were being strangled, to some degree, by our own success; afraid to step beyond our successful formula. I quite simply wanted it all, the standards, the creativity and the genuine commitment of the child.

Through focused training, myself and other members of the leadership team presented different dimensions of inquiry learning looking at approach to teaching, teaching tools for inquiry and children's resources for inquiry. The emphasis for the training was about presenting possibilities and included 'safe options', as well as 'risky options', for inquiry aimed at more confident facilitators. The former tended to rely more heavily on familiar programmes of study and suggest an inquiry approach. 'Risky Options' were less prescriptive in terms of content and approach and relied more heavily on the input of the child as a starting point, and greater emphasis on self- directed learning .

An issue that the standards agenda presents for teachers also has serious implications for how leaders identify and reward effective practice. Teachers are aware that their mandatory annual performance cycle is often linked to performance data and the progress that the children make across the year. Caution needs to be exercised in this respect when performance is being linked to numbers. Wider consideration needs to be given to factors that contribute to the holistic development of the child. I certainly became more mindful of this throughout this process. Additionally, if as leaders we are asking teachers to trial

a different way of working then it is imperative that we provide a safety net and remain un-judgemental so that teachers feel secure enough to 'risk their practice' with a view to improving it.

Nurturing people has always been given top priority as part of my practice. As a leader I had previously established training programmes in response to lesson observation, mentoring, external directives and the outcomes of performance reviews; all worthy informants which I still rely on today to inform my decision making. Previously, I had never really based staff development on the outcomes of professional dialogue. The advantage of professional dialogue is that it alerts participants to possibilities – a case of "you do not know what you do not know until someone presents it as a possibility. Rather like the children not knowing about the kinds of things they can inquire about if their prior experience has not allowed them to encounter possibilities. I now consider the outcomes of professional dialogue as a means of informing future training programmes and find it one of the most informative mechanisms for accessing the views and needs of others.

Focused discussions, coupled with lesson observations, indicated that the children not only found it difficult to respond to questions at any depth, many of them also found it difficult to generate their own questions in the first instance. This was something that was to require intensive training and, through leadership action, was to become one of the most significant changes in our approach teaching and learning within the school.

In the first couple of years of opening the school, I had encountered a colleague who had provided some training for us focused on engaging children in understanding their own learning and learning styles more generally. She had made a positive impression at this point and although I had not encountered her for many years, I suspected that she may be able to advise me. The support of respected colleagues is, of course, a vital dimension in securing our own effective leadership; we have to be aware that we cannot possibly have all of the answers. I was not disappointed. Not only was I able to establish a range of suitable contacts, following a brief conversation, we were also able to secure a fairly substantial sum of money from an Extended Services budget held by the Local Authority to support a project linked to inquiry learning.

From this point onwards, our Philosophy for Children strand of inquiry began. Not only did this approach allow us to develop a framework for questioning, it also provided a structure from which to develop thinking for inquiry. Using the allotted funding, we initially began 'level one' training for teachers from my own school and seven other local schools in close proximity to us. This was supported by six weeks of onsite training within each school. This has since been extended

to ‘level 2’ training for two representatives from each school and, most recently, ‘level 1’ training for support staff. In order to support my own instructional capacity, I was also scheduled to train to ‘level 2’ but a critical incident within the school prohibited my attendance. Unfortunately, it is still on my list of ‘to do things’. As is so often the case, other things must necessarily take priority. Not advisable when working in an instructional capacity, but sometimes a reality. I have relied on my own values as a practitioner, extensive experience and personal reading to continue my development in this respect. As a consequence of our school providing the initial impetus and arranging training opportunities, a net- work of schools has now developed. This provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas for teachers involved in philosophy for children.

Another component of philosophy for children, and a dimension that I find particularly exciting, is the use of lead texts to develop children’s thinking. Since literacy presents us with the most challenges in terms of raising achievement and attainment, we have for some time used a lead text approach as a stimulus for learning. All of my Key Stage One and early year’s staff were trained to use literature as a stimulus for philosophical questioning and some aspects of this were evident in their practice. However, with a complete change of staffing in this phase of the school, the impetus had been slightly lost. A further training cycle in currently in place to address this. In recognition that inquiry working also requires a change of mind set for practitioners new to the school, the last two terms have also been focused on ‘dripping in’ ideas about inquiry learning through school inset, external training and lesson observation. It is a ‘huge ask’ for a Head Teacher to expect new recruits, who are already grappling with the difficulties encountered when adjusting to a new working context, to alter their whole approach to teaching straight away. Appropriate timing and enabling practitioners to see the validity for possible changes to their practice is vital; they need to own the process of change.

Leading the school through curriculum change has taught me the importance of patient leadership; not procrastination – patient leadership; things still need to keep moving. I am generally an individual ‘who wants it done yesterday’. I have learned to hold my ambition for the curriculum and feel more comfortable in redirecting my route and my leadership action, as necessary. I have learned not be deterred from my vision when it becomes apparent that it may take longer to achieve an objective than I had originally anticipated. As all Head Teacher’s recognise, things just keep getting in the way and the ‘goal posts’ keep moving. I suppose my more recently acquired approach is best described as living in the leadership moment and seeing the process of leadership as equally important to the eventual outcome. I would like to achieve a much closer link between literacy, talk, inquiry and philosophical thinking in the Early Years and at Key

Stage One. I would also like to more fully engage parents in this process and am awaiting the outcome of a bid to secure further funding to initiate a project alongside eight other schools. At this current time my leadership action is directed towards realising this ambition for the children. However, as my research has confirmed, my attention at this point is directed towards the adults.

Directing Leadership Time and Energy

Having spent many years keeping the school under the radar of the Local Authority, a rising profile of standards meant that the school was becoming increasingly noticed. I have always been highly selective about the kinds of things that I allow to draw my attention, and that has always included attendance at meetings. In leadership, I have generally found that the idea of, albeit well intended, heads' briefing meeting do little to focus my direction, as they tend to be generic and focused on the latest initiative or 'funding priority'. For me, a blanket approach leadership priorities in one context does not necessarily translate to another because it is the conditions which determine leadership action. Similarly, while they may be useful for professional networking, successive meetings aimed at leaders from a diversity of context simply do not work; there is a tendency to load up with information, much of which is irrelevant and, quite frankly, unnecessarily distracting. For this reason, I have always carefully identified times when I need to be away from the school because I recognise that it will add some value. However, quite early into this project, I was approached by the Local Authority for our school to support another school in an Ofsted category.

In the middle of a research project and a child under three at home, unsurprisingly, my initial response was "no". However, reason, and catholic guilt prevailed, and we partnered with another school in challenging circumstances. Initially this presented me with a huge distraction as it diverted my leadership action away from my own school; particularly as I needed to rapidly develop capacity to work in a different set of circumstances and within a culture very unfamiliar to my own. However, it was later to provide valuable experience for myself and the teachers in our school. In order to provide coaching, it made us look more closely at the *how* of teaching and the leadership of this; what we were actually doing to secure children's success. The wonderful thing about working with young learners in challenging circumstances is that they do not just do something because you ask them and, at times, there is not the infrastructure at home to support learning in school. How perfect for inquiry as this relies on the motivation, interest and engagement of the pupil in directing their learning. In being asked to transpose some aspects of our practice in a new context, we were able to gain a better insight into our own. I would strongly recommend

that effective schools engage in work with a school facing challenges. Providing the infrastructure is in place to support all staff from exhaustion and secure their wellbeing, it is an insightful learning experience.

Working in a different context also highlighted to me the importance of leadership remaining focused on teaching and learning. Despite the excessively hard work of the leadership team in our partnership school, external factors and personnel matters had meant that they had become distracted from the quality of teaching and learning. In redirecting their attention to these matters, coaching and in building a new leadership structure around teaching and learning, we were able to provide effective support for the school and, within a year, they were removed from their Ofsted category. We have retained positive links with our new partners and continue to engage in a number of projects together, including Philosophy for Children.

Redefining Practice

I began this project believing that I was going to develop a new curriculum framework. What I had not anticipated was how this would have such significant ramifications for all areas of our practice. As we encountered each new challenge or issue to consider, we began to re-evaluate so many aspect of our work with children. I recount from my Journal in December 2009:

The Nativity! What! How spiritual is putting on a show? I always thought that the idea of dressing as a sheep was demeaning. Who wants to play follow the leader?

The ranting of a tired Head Teacher approaching the end of term….possibly? Definitely the voice of a leader beginning to question - why? Because we have always done it this way? Because parents expect it? This was the beginning of my journey in more closely analysing our routines and practices more generally, and considering how they contributed more widely to the independence and inquiring capacity of the child. Through observations and professional dialogue we had agreed that the children lacked the ability to spontaneously talk, and found it difficult (or were not given opportunities) for creativity through performance; they did not own this process. By changing our practice in what we expected of the children leading up to a performance, we were able to significantly improve learning. The need to share and perform to parents was not necessarily in question, the educational validity for the child was. Through the leadership action of professional discussion and altering the organisation and preparation for events, we were able to determine a different set of expectations for performance. It became something that was no longer scripted by adults so that a polished outcome could be delivered, but a vehicle for the

creative ideas of the children contained with a scaffold provided by the adults. As I remarked in my journal in May 2010 in discussing the enabling capacity of some teachers:

'From observing practice across the school, it is clear that what the teachers do in one lesson is largely irrelevant (in relation to good or outstanding practice). It is what they consistently do across the year enabling the children that takes practice from good to outstanding. Good teachers are all singing and dancing in themselves, outstanding teachers get the children to do all of the singing and dancing.'

Some teachers had always worked in an enabling way, but it gradually became the school way with a generality about it. The leadership action was to use models of excellence to support others in securing similar practice.

This is just one example of how a reflection on practice, followed by leadership action, led to improved outcomes. Underpinned by a value about what learning should look like for the child and altering our practice accordingly, we were able to improve the process and the outcomes. The point here is not that drama has now improved within the school (although it has, led by a very capable leader, our new end of year show demonstrate the children's creative brilliance!) but that in getting our practice – the bit that the children see – to reflect our underlying principles that the child should be facilitated to create, express and achieve the process and outcomes were greatly improved for the children. Most importantly, the children feel happy and increasingly confident about their learning and this leads to further success.

The messages that we give children both within and outside the class room are often very subtle but incredibly powerful. Are children escorted throughout the schools in lines or can they walk in a trusted manner? Are they passively supervised or constantly directed by an adult? Are they given solutions or facilitated in finding their own? Are they held responsible for leaving their homework at home or are their parents? I could go on. There are often many aspects of school life that we simply do not always get time to analyse and question. This research journey has made me do this to a greater depth, encouraged me to look at many aspects of the internal mechanisms of the school and the kinds of messages that they send to the children. Most importantly, do the messages we send promote independence and inquiry or inhibit it? As a result, Physical Education is now more about being taught the skills and applying these in an active situation. Children decide what questions they wish to investigate about the Vikings and have learned to evaluate the 'googled ' response to their question. It seems clear to me that it is important for the school community to have very clear ideas about what successful teaching and

learning looks like and that teaching, organisation and leadership action should be focused on developing practices that promote this.

One of the mechanisms that we used to develop inquiry practice was to agree a subject focus area for a term. We began with science, then moved to the humanities and religious education, then progressed to physical education and so on. Across these terms we were able to plan inset training in specific areas to support the development of practice. This allowed teachers to experiment with different approaches to inquiry across different areas without 'risking' standards and the potential for chaos. It also provided a context which enabled teachers to work on the development of appropriate skills and attitudes for inquiry. The focus discussions provided a forum to discuss challenges, initiate action and plan the next phase of our inquiry journey.

The next step on from this was to engage Subject Leaders in developing the inquiry process. We already had an existing structure where the curriculum was led in teams of three for the foundation areas of learning, organised as Creative and Performing Arts, Science and Technology and Humanities. This allowed us to prioritise and maintain different areas in line with our school development needs as appropriate. The Deputy Head and I lead the core areas of English and Mathematics and contribute to the other teams in line with our own subject specialism; one in science and the other in a creative art. I began distributing leadership for inquiry process by asking the teams to observe inquiry in their specific areas and identify progress and areas for development. Some of the teams elected to use the focused observation tool as a starting point and found it very useful. As a consequence of their positive feedback, I have since developed a tool from this to use for the purposes of observation in the future (Refer to appendix 12).

Distributing Leadership

In order to sustain an inquiry approach, the distribution of inquiry has been a gradual process. It has involved Subject Leaders engaging in further observations and integrating this into our observation and monitoring schedules. Leaders have been required to plan strategically for inquiry and identify this in their action planning. Firstly, in a way prescribed way; for example, by asking all leaders plan to conduct a work scrutiny, and eventually under their own devices in accordance with the outcomes of their own monitoring and analysis of information. As the following journal extract from February 2010 illustrates:

'What I am noticing from general observations around the school is that inquiry is becoming a feature of many aspects of the work of the school. It is also appearing in strategic planning documents. I think that this is because staff are

becoming more comfortable with the whole notion of inquiry and not seeing it as frightening. I am particularly pleased about the way that we have managed to make inquiry a feature of our global curriculum.'

The distribution of leadership for inquiry is an ever evolving process, particularly as staff changes occur. However, it is certainly rendered easier within a teaching and organisational culture that increasingly identifies inquiry learning as the favoured option for our children. It seems that as teachers develop clarity within their mind-sets and inquiry just becomes and integral aspect of their practice, they are able to transfer this to their capacity as leaders. Leaders, who have, through their own learning journey, developed the capacity to instruct and support others.

Throughout this entire project, while the initial focus was with the teachers, the support staff were also quickly engaged. Their training essentially mirrored that of the teachers and the focused discussions were used in a similar way to inform leadership action. One of the most significant aspects of this was in developing a culture that nurtures the individual, irrespective of their role; using our professional mission as a scaffold for the nurturing process. Nurturing does involve meeting individual's needs and ensuring that they feel contented in their role, but no one community member should be allowed to run their own agenda if it does not serve the interests of other members and - ultimately the reason that all adults are part of a primary school community – the children! It seems to me that in circumstances where schools fail, there is real confusion surrounding the real purpose of the adults within a school – to nurture the children. Leadership should therefore nurture the capacity of **all** adults to nurture the capacity of **all** children. As Harris (2007a, p.36) explains '…organisational growth is not sustainable unless accompanied by the personal growth and transformation of community members.'

Processes, Tools and Artefacts to Sustain Inquiry

Once the staff came to understand, value and practice inquiry, formal structures were then implemented to sustain learning and teaching through inquiry; this was not done the other way around (refer to appendix 13 for an example of documentation). It seems that often policy is put in place to 'force' practice. Aside from the legal requirements, when I initially opened the school, we ran for the first year without one policy in place and, unsurprisingly, we survived. The focus was to establish the practice first and then formalise this through policy – it is difficult to own a process if it is thrust upon you in the form of a paper booklet. In a similar way, the development of inquiry was approached with this value system as the driving impetus. We have now reached the point, in our evolution as an inquiry school, where our approach to inquiry is being formally

documented. The purpose of this is solely to support new staff and to set expectations for practice and provide advice. As with all formal structures, this will need to be under constant review to accommodate the changing profile of learners and adults within the school. However, this alone is not enough, unless supported by professional dialogue, training, mentoring and a genuine commitment on the part of the professionals who are responsible for guiding the children's learning, the booklets have limited effect.

A further example of how inquiry in being formalised within the ethos of the school is that it now appears in our documentation used to guide the evaluation of teaching and learning and observations of standards. This ensures that, irrespective of who is observing the lessons, there is an expectation that the person will be making a judgement about the children's inquiry competencies, attitudes and how teaching facilitates this. Additionally, it is a key feature of the professional development review and individual training can be identified and delivered through this mechanism. Staff are aware that their practice will now be judged against the standards that we have set for inquiry, and our expectations about the high degree of personal involvement that the child should have in the learning process. Similarly, our formal school self- evaluations structures have inquiry embedded into the review process.

In appointing new staff to the school, their values around engagement of children and their beliefs around how children should be encouraged to learn are now given much greater weighting than their prior experience and the kind of formal qualification that they bring to the role; this is also reflected in person specifications.

As inquiry has become imbedded in practice, it is easier to identify children who, for whatever reason, find it more difficult to engage in the learning process. The most recent leadership action has been to train support staff in relation to this and to develop support packages to facilitate the children's approach to learning (refer to appendix seven for examples of materials). This initiative is still in its early stages so the impact is yet to be established. However, the objective is to target small groups of children to work with support staff on an intervention strategy to amend their approach to learning. A key component of this is to develop children's independence, self- reflection and capacity to extend their own learning.

Change as Part of Everyday School Life

As with any path to change, our journey to achieving our objective has not been a linear one; neither do I anticipate that the future holds any less challenge. As a leader I have encountered many events that have really challenged my

leadership skills, some of them the most personally challenging that I have ever encountered (and would hope not to relive again in my career). A number of staff required lengthy periods of absence due to the need for surgery; this created potential threats to the quality of teaching, administration and site management. There was a serious threat to safeguarding that resulted in the dismissal of a staff member. We encountered a critical incident on school journey where a child went missing – I had to dig deeper into my personal reserves than ever before because of the traumatic effect that this had on the staff. I needed to involve the police due to a child protection concern where a parent sought to incite hatred against a child whose mother she had fallen out with. We had a change of senior leadership and five teachers required maternity leave. A member of staff lost her husband due to cancer. The school bursar, a trusted colleague with whom I had worked with since the school opened, needed to leave due to the development of a serious health condition. I could go on. Maybe the challenges are different in nature but all too familiar scenarios for Head Teachers – and this is without even stepping into the classroom and the social and emotional complexities that the children need support with. Never mind the demands that we all have as human beings with personal commitments living in a complex society!

The point here is not to dwell in self- pity and victorious celebration for overcoming challenges (although a moment was nice), rather to highlight the importance of having clear systems and networks within a supportive, collaborative culture. Practices and procedures that people own and can identify with, and most importantly, take an appropriate measure of responsibility for playing their part in helping to put things right so that we can get back on track – to refocus on the children. I believe that this can only be established if people are involved in creating many of these practices, whether they contribute to teaching, welfare, site or administration. There are inevitably a plethora of potential distractions that take us away from the core purpose of our leadership work. Our success as leaders is reliant on developing an organisational culture that protects us, and does not allow these distractions to become overwhelming so that the children get forgotten.

Leading the school towards a curriculum and practices that are premised on an inquiry approach is by no means complete. It is very unlikely that it will always need leadership attention because it drills to the very core of the work of the school – that of teaching and learning. However, the roots for further development are firmly established. As evidenced in further chapters, this has not been a linear and challenge free path. As professionals, we have encountered many barriers that have required a determined focus and reflective leadership and teacher action.

In trying to develop a new curriculum, what began as a desire to engage the children more fully in their learning and to give them choices around this, very quickly escalated into a complete re-evaluation of many aspects of the ways that we teach children and the organisational culture that provides the context for this. The following chapters explore this journey in more detail.

Chapter 5 – The Voice of the Children

Introduction

It is highly likely that the majority of primary aged pupils, if asked what the purpose of school is, will elicit a response that recognises the primary function of school is to learn- what this means for different children is another matter. A child's mode of thinking will inevitably go some way to determining their perceptions of, and performance within, school. The values that children receive from home will also, no doubt, have a measure of influence on the child's initial readiness for school and their capacity to access the learning opportunities presented to them (Booker, 2002). However, personality and home background is only the beginning of a range of complex processes that will ultimately impact of the child's ability to learn and progress within a school context.

Hattie (1999) draws attention towards the need to consider estimates of magnitude of teacher effect and their impact on student work. From large scale analysis of existing research, Hattie (2003) asserts that a 50% variance in pupils' achievement can be attributed to the child; 5% -10% attributed home factors; 5-10% attributed to schools (including Head Teachers); 5% -10% peer effect and a huge 30% variance can be attributed to teacher effect. The influence that teachers have in supporting learning is supported by this research. The children in this study repeatedly referred to the role that their teachers played in relation to a number of issues. As argued throughout this chapter, the issues identified by the children, play a significant role in determining their capacity to learn and, subsequently, their achievement. For this reason the role of the teacher is a strand that is discussed from issues that emerged from discussions with the children. Teacher role is also an integral aspect of discussion around issues emerging from direct observation of their children's behaviours within the context of the classroom.

Throughout the course of this chapter, the voice of children is used to illustrate the most significant themes raised by them. This information is taken from semi-structured interviews. A notable area identified by the children is their enjoyment of learning and the kind of opportunities that their teachers afford them in creating a stimulating and engaging learning environment. I use observational records, taken from inquiry lessons, to identify aspects of teacher practice intended to support the children's learning through inquiry. Children viewed choice as a very important feature of the learning process. The motivational, social and challenging aspect of giving learner choice is also addressed in this chapter. The children also identified the social and emotional dimensions of learning as a crucial factor in determining their perceptions of school. The role of the children and the teacher in determining this is explored.

One of the most surprising dimensions of this research is also discussed in detail. A strongly emerging theme was the children's views about display and the kind of values that this transmits and how this, in turn, influences the children's identity as learners.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss what we can learn from the views and behaviours of children and how this in turn can direct Instructional leadership practice. For this reason, the chapter closes with a summary of key findings which could enhance the professional work of teachers as leaders in creating a learning environment conducive to inquiry.

Approach to Learning

As this chapter primarily is concerned with the views and actions of the children, their approach to learning is possibly the best place to start. Booker (2002) suggests that one of the most important things that children will learn from home is about the value of learning itself. This is then shaped by their experience of school (Hughes, 2010). For the purpose of discussion, approach to learning is understood to be: the values that the children hold about learning, the attitudes that they exhibit towards the learning process and the behaviours that the children demonstrate while engaged in learning whether this be social, emotional or cognitive learning.

(1) Organisation for Learning

In order to support the children's development, it was necessary for the teachers to acquire a series of strategies to help the children organise their physical environment. These included measures such as developing defined areas for use of resources; routines for leaving the room for research purposes; time frames; areas to leave work in progress; specified numbers of pupils using different equipment; routines for access to ICT provision; expectations for clearing the room and specific roles within this; noise controls for working and so on. It also became necessary to control interruptions for young learners, because many of them had not yet developed the resilience required to return quickly to their task. All of these practices, and many more, one would expect to see in an effective classroom environment. However, for inquiry, these practices need to be attended to by teachers at the outset so that they create a physical environment that is conducive to learning. The physical organisation and group management of the environment needs to be negotiated and shared by all so that practice is agreed and explicit. It is also worth remembering, that rigorous teacher focus can accelerate children's ability to acclimatise to routines by offering regular reinforcement.

In the early phases of the project, many children generally found organisation for inquiry difficult. Some children found gathering and managing resources challenging; others felt challenged with activities that were not directed by an adult. Some children felt unable to take risks to make decisions about how to use their work space, while others found routine to share resources perplexing. This was not necessarily linked to pupils' current levels of attainment (as indicated by national performance measures). At Key Stage Two, some of the higher attaining, unmotivated pupils encountered challenges and some of the lower attaining learners were comparable with their peers in terms of organisation and independence. Difficulties with organisation for learning and a link to attainment tended to be more prevalent for younger children. Younger children attaining below average tended to lack independence and perseverance for inquiry. What was relevant, however, was that through their journey with inquiry, high attaining, motivated pupils rapidly acquired an approach necessary to secure positive outcomes. Observation indicated that it was this group of children who exhibited a successful approach; they required little direction from others and were capable of leading the learning of others. Additionally, irrespective of the amount of rehearsal experience provided, some learners remained unable to fully acquire the degree of independence and self- direction necessary for effective learning through inquiry. It is these children, irrespective of attainment, who have been identified for support, through specific mentoring through our intervention strategy to enhance their approach to learning.

Due to their initial lack of experience, when engaged in verbal communication, the children tended to focus their discussion on the organisational dimensions of their work. Consequently, their dialogue lacked depth in relation to their initial inquiry investigation. Coupled with this, younger learners in particular, when given choice of activity and space for working, tended to move around too quickly to provide any opportunity to develop depth to their talk. Even when the children became more organisationally proficient, they still needed assistance in elaborating on ideas so that they could further their thinking. In reminding us of the implication of Vgotsky's work for the practice of teaching, Smasorinsky (2007) recalls that, even when people are alone, their thinking involves a kind of dialogue with others. He also comments on the playful and exploratory elements of speech and the importance of these in the development of ideas. This was apparent when teachers were trying to secure the children's talk as a route to developing their thinking. In leading their classes, through reflective practice, the teachers quickly recognised the importance in scaffolding the talking process. This could be done through direct intervention or by giving the children a talking frame to guide their dialogue. During observation, it was notable that when an adult intervened in sensitive and timely manner, they were able to use language to facilitate the children's thinking. This secured more rapid

progress and routes to further thinking. Equally, well timed adult intervention was able to ensure that the children challenged themselves and their thinking. This was not something that happened automatically in the majority of classes, unless it was an implicit expectation that had been set by the teacher when evolving their pedagogic relationship with the children.

(2) Challenges and the Provision of Scaffolding

From my discussions with the children, one of the features that was evident is how they view challenges and their subsequent response to them. As mentioned, my observation indicates that children will generally not challenge themselves to the outer parameters of their ability unless facilitated by an adult – they generally need to be guided to understand the possibilities with their learning; guided to take risks. I suggest that this is rather a case of "you do not know what you do not know unless someone enlightens you", rather than any reluctance on the majority of the children part. Importantly, however, children need to be given permission by adults to take risks with their learning; for it is this, coupled with a 'safety strap' that provides the optimum conditions for learning. In this sense teachers can transform, rather than inform children's approach to learning, (Barth, 2007). As further discussion will highlight, the kind of 'safety strap' that teachers need to provide for children is of prime importance.

The following interview extracts illustrate the children's views in response to perceived challenges or when they encounter something difficult. The following nine and ten year old pupils suggests:

Pupil 1: I don't like to be challenged in like, oh my god, I can't do that. I like to be challenged as say… in year five work. We are not that great but we're getting there. We were all like WOW and we knew we could do something a bit harder.

Pupil 2: Also what I find hard is when, if you are finding something difficult, Mr King says come and sit on this table if you're finding it difficult but you don't really want to because you might feel embarrassed.

Other nine year old pupils responded in the following away to questions about difficulty.

***LC**: When you find something difficult, how do you feel?*

***Pupil 1**: I feel scared when I'm going to tell the teacher.*

***Pupil 2**: I feel wound up and actions that I've got to quickly do it even though I'm going to get told off.*

***Pupil 3**: Um… kind of annoyed. I ask the teacher and she said sit down.*

***Pupil 4**: When I find work difficult to do I really don't know what to do because I kind of forget then the teacher says 'hurry up'. I don't like to tell anybody I really like that's it's difficult.*

***Pupil 5**: On what things you find easy or difficult, I think research about football is easy. I know the best player from Argentina now.*

***Pupil 6**: Things are easier when you make your own decisions and it's not easy when you get given work.*

***Pupil 5**: It's better if you get to choose it.*

Slightly older ten year old pupils responded in the following way.

***Pupil 1:** I feel like I don't want to do it and I'm not really enthusiastic so I don't.*

***Pupil 2**: I feel a bit worried and I think I'm not going to produce much work out of this and I think I'm going to get proper told off. I get a bit worried.*

There are clearly some issues here about the kind of 'safety strap' that is being provided within the classroom context and, as shall be discussed, this will certainly contribute significantly to how the children approach their learning, but there are also lessons for practice from the children's voice and actions. In one of the above extracts, the children clearly felt uneasy about asking for help if they required it; the implied reason is the teacher's response. In the other, it was perceived expectation in relation to work output. Observation and other discussions with the children indicated that many pupils did not have an active approach to seeking help and some (this tended to be passive learners) were unaware that they actually needed help to progress their learning. In some cases, the children reported that using resources to help their learning was cheating; even though there are consistent structures in place to support independent access to resources. During interviews, the children were very clear in determining what they do not need to enhance their learning - things that they do not like. The children found it difficult to identify things that might help them. Coupled with this, many of the children felt uncomfortable about making errors in their learning either because of the teacher's perceived response, the response of their peers or because they do well in their work (and did not see error as an acceptable part of this). Whether or not the children's inability to access help is due to their personal disposition or that of their teacher, the effect is the same. The valuable opportunity of taking risks to following the path in directing their own learning and seeking help when they veer from the path is missed.

(3) Feedback Influences Approach

There is evidence to suggest that there is a crucial link between the quality of feedback that teachers provided and learners' achievement. This has been suggested to be one of the most powerful single influences enhancing

achievement (Hattie, 2008). This implies that the kinds of expectations that teachers communicate around learning and their response to children's errors are important. In view of this evidence, children need to understand the kind of help that they require to further their learning and be aware of strategies to access help. My professional knowledge suggests that teacher action in this respect needs to be two fold. The first aspect of teacher leadership action needs to be in establishing explicit and agreed guidelines that allow the children to recognise when they need help and how they can access it; this will inevitably involve some practical and physical routines. More importantly, teachers also need to be aware of the powerful role that they hold in responding to children's requests for help and may need to actively challenge predetermined values around children admitting that they need help. In establishing a culture where it is 'cool to learn', professional learning suggests that there also needs to be a classroom culture where is it 'cool to ask for help'. A culture which hands the responsibility back to the child for making decisions pertaining to their learning needs. Perhaps in the way Barth (2007) suggests by giving children cards that say 'permission to take a risk' and on the back 'I took a risk but it didn't go well but I learned….'; this provides permission, even an expectation. Alternatively, children should occasionally be restricted to reflecting on what they did wrong in their learning, not what went well. Irrespective of how it is achieved, teacher action needs to promote error and access to help. This should not be in a helpless inducing manner but in a proactive way that allows the learner to act on advice.

My professional knowledge also informs me that it is important that the children understand the balance between a classroom ethos that challenges learners, but also values the recognition on the part of the learner that they need help. If time is spent allowing children to explore their learning needs, then they are right to voice that they are the most informed about what they need. As the following exchange demonstrates, sometimes the children do not recognise that their teacher is trying to challenge their thinking and is, in fact, being complementary about their ability. Not only does the following interview extract indicate how perceptive children are about their achievement in relation to their peers (some might argue a reason for never setting if we are to preserve high levels of efficacy); it also illustrates why pedagogic relationships within the classroom are so important – attention to the physical and practical structures alone are not enough.

Pupil 1*: If my teacher says to sit on the table* (identified help station where teacher is located*) if you are struggling with something; when someone on my table comes if we don't get it, our teacher will go 'You'll work it out fine by yourself.' Yet he lets the lowest two tables go on to that table but he's not letting the highest, even if they don't get it.*

***Pupil 2**: That's about treating people differently because of the tables they're on.*

Tackling preconceived views about error and associated issues around children securing help is complex and by no means an easy feat. It is a never ending journey that we are still on in relation to school practice; it embodies all aspects of the classroom culture. My leadership action is to recognise this and to continue to highlight its importance through professional reflection and training of staff.

While it is important to be encouraging, children do not appreciate gushing non-specific and insincere praise (Faber and Mazlish, 1995). In view of this, any discerning teacher will be aware that inappropriate praise does little to develop trusting relationships that scaffold the learning process between them and their pupils. In this study, the children clearly identified that, if they feel themselves to be good at something, this enhanced their motivation and approach. Teacher feedback can be very influential in determining how children perceive their ability (Hattie, 2008). As the following eleven year old pupil suggests:

***Pupil 1**: For me it's not what I think about my work, it's what other people think. 'Cause if they think it's good then I know it's good. But if I think it's good then it's just me then you have no idea what other people think. It's like an author, there's no point in writing a book if you think, when it's going to millions of people, who hate it.*

Although they might articulate it in a different fashion, it would take an extremely, and unusually, self- assured primary child to feel any differently. Children tend to respond much better to specific praise that highlights what actions and attitudes is furthering their progress. The avoidance of negative, normative and comparative feedback seems to be more effective. A focus on formative, supportive, well timed and specific feedback is suggested to support the learning process (Shuter, 2008). Of course, praise is important, but to contribute to the learning process and to have an impact on children approach, it is best framed in a way that is meaningful and in an accessible way for children. For our purpose in developing inquiry, teacher action that made use of formative markers in the form of an assessment and evaluative framework (see appendix 15) helped to enhance children approach to learning. If the ultimate object is to further the children's approach by using positive feedback, in this respect, children can become engaged and see the worth in the feedback that they are being given.

(4) Motivated Approach

In response to what motivates them to learn, the children were not particularly vocal about any desire to be 'entertained' on a daily basis. I had expected them to prescribe an array of things that they found interesting with negative

comments about more 'traditional' modes of learning, but their comments were fairly balanced. The children did tend to favour a thematic approach to learning. There was the usual trend in that they tended to find practical subjects more enjoyable. They also raised the importance of being happy with their learning. This was not necessarily related to specific areas of learning, rather an overall perspective that they held about their learning more generally and the kind of opportunities that their teachers afforded them. It would appear that the children found the curriculum relevant either because it was fun and enjoyable (Lord, 2005) or because of the value system the children adhered to. The older children, in particular, seemed willing to persevere for future gratification. There was a recognition that the children also needed to focus on areas that might be considered less appealing because they wanted to do well in school and in life. As the following extracts taken from the group interviews with year 6 pupils indicates:

"Being happy helps with learning"

"I would say happiness because if I am happy, I just get on with my work."

"Happiness 'cause I'm mostly happy and it just help me to get on with my work. I can't really get on with my work if I'm sad. If something bad has happened at home and I'm going to do my homework, I just block it out with some nice music."

"I do it to achieve good standards so when I go up to secondary school I can be in one of the top groups so I can get a good job."

"Like what Travis said, to get into high groups and when I'm in senior school I know that I've put my heart into it to get the job that I want when I'm older."

The following exchange clearly demonstrates the motivation of this male pupil to succeed.

***Pupil 1**: Just to go back to what you said, you shouldn't be thinking about jobs.*

***LC**: No I think it's good, but I wondered what motivated you on a daily basis.*

***Pupil 1:** I always say to my dad, I know what I want to be, I know what car I want when I'm older, I know what person I want to be. And he always goes, you shouldn't be thinking about that, you should be like your brother 'cause he has no idea. He always says just calm down and think about your work for now – it really annoys me.*

(5) Behavioural Approach

Observation of the children within the classroom would suggest that there was a general compliance with behavioural expectations of the school, with no overt incidence of disruption. This did not mean that all of the children were necessarily making progress. However, even in the early phases of inquiry, when the organisation within classes could be somewhat chaotic, the children

maintained a polite approach and remained responsive to teacher instruction. This clearly indicates that the children have internalised the behavioural expectations of the school. A very positive starting point when introducing potentially risky teaching and learning – teacher action needs to ensure that values around expected approach within the classroom need to be strongly and clearly transmitted.

(6) Choice in Determining Approach

What did appear to be influential in securing the children's motivation, thus an enthusiastic approach to learning, was not just about the content of the curriculum, but also the choice that inquiry learning provides. As the following pupils describe it:

***Pupil 1**: I really like inquiry because you have a lot more freedom than you have in certain subjects and you have to do a certain thing so you do it. With inquiry, you can choose what you do.*

***Pupil 2**: If we've got an inquiry project we can choose how we learn and what we want to find out about. In other lessons you don't choose.*

***Pupil 3**: I like being given the choice. I like choice because if you don't like a subject you can choose your favourite subject.*

The children felt very strongly that their relationship with their teacher was extremely important. In view of children's strong views on this matter, not only should there be a moral purpose to securing positive relationships within the context of the classroom, there are substantial statistical associations between teacher relationships and pupils' achievement (Roorda et al, 2011). Allowing the children to make choice about their learning proved to be a very powerful factor in determining the pedagogic relationships established within the classroom. This was not necessarily just because it allowed children to express their preferences; it also has something to do with the kind of value system and power relations that were beginning to emerge through inquiry. These relationships, in turn, influenced the children's approach to learning.

(7) Leading an Approach to Learning

In my capacity as a leader, my focus in relation to the children's approach to learning was initially to focus teachers' attention onto their practice and the children's response to this. Using professional dialogue and inset training, opportunities for discussion around the children's approach were provided. Subsequent training was then initiated to explore ways to tackle this within the classroom. At a later date, using criteria linked to inquiry skills, focused observations proved to be useful in helping to inform practice.

In summary, the following teacher leadership action facilitated improvements in the children's approach to learning.

- Being explicit about the kind of behavioural expectations that were expected in a learning environment helped to maintain a sense of safety within the classroom when the children were acquiring new organisational and self-management skills.
- Establishing expectations around interruption of learning, particularly for younger children.
- An explicit focus on the physical organisation of the classroom and self-management skills was necessary. Specific intervention needs to be provided for pupils who find organisation for learning persistently difficult.
- Teachers' observational skills need to be astute so that they can intervene in the learning process in a timely way so that they can move children's learning forward. Practice in observation is necessary to secure this and an observational frame can be a useful tool.
- Teacher instruction about ways in which children can access help within the classroom is important; children also need support in identifying when they might need help.
- A mindful and sensitive response to children's requests for help is advisable if teachers wish to develop a self-directed approach to learning.
- Being explicit with children about how challenges are presented and establishing an ethos where children feel safe to take risks with their learning helps them to feel brave enough to extend their learning.
- Tackling preconceived ideas about error and creating a classroom ethos where error is expected and understood to be a vital route to improvements in learning is crucial in helping the children to take risks.
- Using a frame that is available for use and inspection by the children, to guide and assess their approach to learning is useful. In this respect, praise can be reference to clear ideas about exactly what action or attitude is improving the child's approach.
- Allowing time to stand back and reflect on the pedagogical relationship that prevails within the classroom and the kind of messages that this delivers to children is crucial.

Choice

"Much of what is disturbing about student's attitude and behaviour may be a function of the fact that they have little to say about what happens to them all day. They are compelled to follow someone else's rules, study someone else's curriculum, and submit continually to someone else's evaluation. The mystery, really, is not that so many students are indifferent about what they have to so in school but that any of them are not." (Kohn, 1993, p1)

As discussed in chapter one, the context in which children are being taught will inevitably prescribe the pedagogy governing their education; the internal context of the classroom will no doubt be influenced, in part, by prevailing external conditions. Writing in 1993, Kohn reflects the conditions at the time which, I would have argued, have got progressively more constraining. In Britain, as we moved into the twenty first century, curriculum flexibility was at a low (Elliot, 2001). It remains to be seen what 2014 curriculum changes will bring. The way in which the curriculum can inhibit creative thought is one of the features of British education that concern me most as a teacher and as a parent of a primary aged child. Learning in the twenty first century requires initiative, adaptation and the ability to creatively apply knowledge. The idea of a child centred progressive pedagogy has become discredited because declining standards have been attributed to it. However, as Woods (2002) points out, a political focus pointing to progressive ideas about education is often false and counter- productive. The complexities of teaching are also influenced by social and cultural context combined with the biography and experience of practitioners. I would wholeheartedly support Wood's (2002) suggestion that we move towards creative teaching that allows practitioners to independently assert their inventiveness. Indeed, that is the essence of this project and my leadership action; with the added dimension of teachers responding to the creative need for children to assert their inventiveness. The challenge for teachers in asserting their creative talents is addressed in detail in chapter six. For the children, their creative journey through inquiry begins with choice.

Through interviews and close scrutiny of their behaviour within the classroom it is evident that giving children choice is one of the most motivating features of inquiry. The high levels of attention and perseverance, even when faced with other organisational challenges, secured both the children's and the adult commitment to inquiry learning. Of course, inquiry learning does necessarily have to begin with a component of choice; it is possible to prescribe it as a collection of skills for children to acquire and the teacher can entirely direct the focus of inquiry. This is useful when trying to develop skills discretely; or, dare I say it, to secure National Curriculum coverage. Also, the children themselves recognise that teacher intervention, in some aspects of choice, is important and welcome it. However, to resort to adult decision making alone as a general mode of practice would be to lose the incredibly powerful and exciting opportunity that choice can bring to all aspects of children's learning. I offer the voice of the children to illustrate my point.

LC: *How do you feel when adults make decision for you?*

Pupil 1*: A bit controlled.*

***Pupil 2**: To be honest I like it when they give us things to do to be honest. If they give us say, like to give us an inquiry project, we might have no idea where to start. So it's quite… sometimes helpful but a bit controlled, like you say.*

***Pupil 3**: I think it's kind of necessary really. If the teachers weren't kind of controlling what we were doing, we really wouldn't have much ideas for inquiry projects. However, it is gets too controlled it can get a bit boring.*

***Pupil 4**: I sometimes think that although our teacher does give us a certain amount to do, I prefer it when he gives us a choice of new things to do with what we are doing.*

***Pupils 5**: I like it when our teacher gives us, say a sub-heading of different things to do, we could have had shipwrecks. A range of different ideas and we can choose from that range.*

***LC**: What do you think the adults think about the choices you make?*

***Pupil 1**: Well umh… I'm really not sure, I don't think they mind if children, they know that they're going to make the right choice. If they know that the children are going to make the right choice, they'll be fine.*

***Pupil 2**: Even sometimes if my teacher thinks that it's not a very good group and he wants to put them in other groups then he will. But sometimes only a couple will get moved.*

***Pupil 3**: I think that if we did one project and the teacher observed and then we'd come to another project and the people who messed around before and they'd go together again. I think the teacher might say 'hold on, you've done this so there's no point'. If the teacher knew that we were going to mess around. Personally, like, I don't want to be embarrassed.*

***LC**: How much do you think adults should input into your learning?*

***Pupil 1**: I would say about half.*

***Pupil 2**: They should like know a bit what we're doing and then like (and you can probably expect the teacher knows how much that person is going to produce). But if they do below standards of what the teacher thinks he might do, he should step in.*

***Pupil 3**: We will have more freedom anyway because we will be moving around classes.*

***Pupil 4**: In senior school a lot of people don't exactly want to learn. You have to have some control over yourself and the learning but you need a bit of freedom.*

What is very clear from talking to the children in depth from age seven to eleven is that they appreciate and feel motivated by the opportunity to make choices about the content of the curriculum. They also express a preference for choice for their way of working and the people that they work with. As part of the process of choice, however, children also recognise the need for adults to guide them in making decisions.

The motivational benefits of choice are significant. However, in leading practice, it is necessary to place this within a context which secures maximum benefit for children. Perhaps, in the past, this has not been the case with progressive ideas and therefore they become open to criticism or may result in a decline in

standards (HMI, 1977-82;DES, 1977). Just affording choice and opportunity alone is not enough; there are some cautionary lessons to be considered. My observation of children within a learning context indicates that when too much choice is given to younger learners, particularly Reception and Key Stage One pupils, this can inhibit the depth of their questioning and thinking that they are able to engage in. Sometimes the very task of making a choice – a decision in itself - is a mammoth undertaking. As Cox et al (2006) point out; children need a conversation about choice prior to making one. From their research focused on children's engagement in the decision making process, they report that children need time and space to explore and understand this process. In our school context, this led to a need for teachers to discretely explore the nature of decision making and consider what making a choice actually involves. Making a choice is a specific skill informed by a whole array of values that needed unpacking. The use of story books and discrete lessons on decision making facilitated the children capacity to understand decision making processes. Providing parameters from within which children make choices also helped to alleviate potential confusion and overload. Additionally, the depth of thinking promoted through Philosophy for Children was instrumental in helping to guide the adults and children through the journey of making choices. This in turn was to have a positive impact on the quality of the questions the children were able to ask to lead their path through inquiry.

(1) Children Work Better

The idea that children 'talk more and teachers talk less' seems to me to be a very good one. I have always held the belief that children tend not to get better at something unless they practice it - the notion that genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. It is my professional opinion that when teachers' over talk, the rate of children's learning is slowed down. Through excessive teacher talk, children have less opportunity to develop the narrative and questioning skills necessary to demonstrate understanding, and it provides less opportunity for teachers to be diagnostic about children's learning, (Alexander, 2008). With reference to the controlling aspect of teachers making too many choices for the children, as discussed by the children in the extract, observation within an inquiry setting demonstrated that when teachers prescribed the inquiry question that the children were going to pursue or restricted the children's method of recording to a preferred type, thinking was constrained. Nor did the children demonstrate the same levels of interest in the subject matter. If, for instructional purposes, it becomes necessary to confine children's choices for inquiry, it is advisable to limit this to only some aspect of the process. If the teaching focus is recording, teachers can limit choice within this area. If the teaching focus is questioning, teachers should avoid prescribing the subject

matter and so on. By over controlling the process, the impetus for inquiry can be lost. Almost unanimously, the children spoke very positively about inquiry, particularly because of the choice that is afforded them. When teachers provided too much direction, over talked and thus controlled, some of the usual complaints about more traditional kinds of learning re-emerged. The following interview extract from an eight year old child aptly illustrates this point.

LC: If you do an inquiry project does the time pass quickly or slowly?

Pupil 1: Slowly because the teacher really likes to talk a lot about the country and what we have to do. But I think you should get on with it because… umh… without the teacher.

(2) The Social Dynamics of Groups can be Problematic

Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges that children face when given a choice is the social dynamics. This was not something that teachers were initially aware of. From a teacher's perspective, concerns about children making choices initially tended to focus on the quality of the outcome in relation to choice. This included: whether or not the children would avoid writing in free recording; or would choice of working arrangements lead to the child's distraction? Whether or not the initial inquiry subjects would lend themselves to in-depth thinking was also a consideration. All very valid concerns but what we had not initially recognised was the difficulty that the children experienced regarding the social dimension of choice.

Observation indicates that, when given a free choice as to who they work with, children tend to opt for same sex groups. Even when there is a mixed gender group, there does tend to be a division of labour within this. If we are to prepare children properly to take their place within the adult world and avoid children adopting gender stereotyped notions about the opposite sex, it is important that we help children to gain a better understanding of each other's values and patterns of working. Even leaving gender aside, this is an important aspect of children's emotional and social development. There are glimmers in the children's response that they are beginning to think about a range of factors in making choice about whom they work with. They report that they tend to choose their friends and, in general, the children's close friendship groups tend to be same sex. This is justified on the basis that children feel comfortable sharing ideas and accepting advice from people that they know well. The following interview extract captures the children's views in this respect.

***LC**: Is there any kind of person you find it easier to work with?*

***Female pupil**: My friends.*

***Female pupil**: Children that I know, not someone that I have barely spoken to.*

***Male pupil**: People like me, people who have the same hobbies as me. Like Andrew, we've got twenty two things in common.*

***Female pupil**: Someone I play with and talk to. But if I'm like with a boy…*

***Female pupil**: It's just that the girls talk more to the girls; they feel more comfortable with the girls.*

***Interviewer**: If some people are easier to work with, what kind of people are hard to work with?*

***Male pupil**: I would say someone who has the opposite ways of working.*

***Male pupil**: I think people who don't like… who aren't focused and who can't be bothered to learn.*

***Female pupil**: Say you are with someone who just talks all the time. You're not confident to talk with.*

***Male pupil**: Um.. I feel, sometimes I feel I work best with people who are the same level as me because you can like do a piece of writing very well because you are on the same level. But sometimes it's people on a different level so that we can do a mixture of writing. If there is someone the same as me then my teacher will say that you have got to have more variety.*

***Female pupil**: Well I used to work with Ellie or Georgie. I used to be best friends with Georgie but throughout the years she has gone off me a bit and I don't know a thing about her any more. I used to know a lot about her but I don't know a thing about her anymore.*

***LC**: What makes someone easier to work with?*

***Female pupil**: Depends, sometimes you don't know a thing about them before you work with them. I like it sometimes because you get to know new people.*

An eight year old pupil describes her choice in the following way.

LC: Why do you choose particular people to work with?

Pupil 1: You usually choose your friend because you know them. It's nice to choose people you know than people that don't speak to you that much. I don't like it when we get chosen for groups 'cause you don't want to be in that group because all of your friends are together and you feel left out.

One of the potential difficulties in always offering children choice about who they work with is that children may never elect to move beyond their comfort zone. In this respect, they lose some of the benefits that can come from working with a range of different personalities. Some of the children reported that while they enjoyed the company of some people outside the classroom, they found it difficult to say "no" to working with them on inquiry projects. The reason cited was that they were their friend and they did not wish to offend them. Although friendship can provide a measure of security for children within a learning context, it can also evoke difficulties and may deter children from making decisions in the classroom that are actually in their best interest. The children

clearly recognise this and suggest that adult guidance is important in this respect. The role of the adult in facilitating different ways of working is important; children need to be guided in making decisions about reasons for making social choices. In response to this, leadership action was focused on highlighting social choices as part of our inquiry skills and attitude evaluation; this included the ability to be oppositional and justify choices. In terms of teacher action, what seems to be a key factor here is to allow children opportunities to become familiar with one another in a social or play setting rather than forcing gender groups for learning in the first instance. If children are given, by teacher design, the opportunity to develop trusting relationships (which can challenge) with one another outside learning contexts, they may be more likely to incorporate other factors into their decision making around grouping for learning rather than friendship alone. This can then be applied to the, potentially more emotionally threatening, context of the classroom. Indeed, children may also become more proficient in opposing and regulating their friendships when in a cognitive learning situation and develop the capacity to resist inappropriate peer influence – what a truly powerful learning disposition!

The children were very verbal about the social dimension of choice. They recognised the cohesive element of it and recognised that they can get to know different people. The children also discussed the dilemmas and possibility of people being left out - not chosen. A further challenge for the children in making choices is about inter group behaviour. They expressed difficulty in asserting themselves in a group situation suggesting that this, in turn, inhibits further choices in relation to their learning. The following interview extracts illustrates this point.

***LC**: What kind of things do you find difficult when you are learning through inquiry?*

***Pupil 1**: Sometimes if you want to do something else and no one else does, you find it difficult to fit in everything you want to do.*

LC: What's the hard thing about working as a group then?

Pupil 1: Co-operation

Pupil 2: Umh.. but you might want to do something and they want to do something else and you can't agree.

Pupil 2: I would rather stick to what ideas I have but sometimes you can't express your ideas. 'Cause I know in several groups I've been in, I've been with Helen and she couldn't express her ideas because people kept butting in.

***LC**: What makes people difficult to work with?*

***Pupil 1**: Not understanding.*

***Pupil 2**: Not listening.*

***Pupil 3**: When you say disagree, and you say let's put this in and they say 'We don't want to but they're not actually doing any of the work.*

***Pupil 4**: The difficult people to work with, sometimes, I accidently said the word wrong and they took the mickey out of me.*

LC: Would it be easier for an adult to make that decision?

Pupil 1: If someone else chooses me and we want to go together and someone else chooses me, I feel bad to stand up and say 'I would prefer to work with another person' because I don't think I get on with them very well.

When asked about the freedom to choose groups, nine year old children responded in the following way.

***Pupil 1**: Some ruin it for others.*

***Pupil 2**: Children can be sensible when they have to pick what they are learning about but not when picking groups.*

***Pupil 3**: Children don't know how to make choices when choosing people to work with. People get upset if you don't choose them.*

***Pupil 4**: Nigel influences Aiden and he gets in trouble so he should have the choice to move away.*

Across all aspects of the interview data, the children repeatedly raised issues about the challenges that they encounter when working with others. At times, they expressed a reluctance to share their ideas with others in case they were greeted with disinterest. At these times they want the adult to take control and set the expectation to return to a place of safety. As shall shortly be discussed, this has implication for the way in which the social and emotional climate of the classroom is crafted. The children expressed a keenness for adult intervention to help support with this process. Not in the sense that the adult overrides the children's decisions when they encounter difficulties; rather a kind of guidance with shared responsibility. The following interview extract from eleven year olds represents the pupils' voice on this matter.

***LC**: Do you ever think there's a case when adults should choose who you work with?*

***Pupil 1**: Yeah. Just like every now and again. Like… that's not such a good idea because so and so just mess around.*

***Pupil 2**: Sometimes me and Kevin go together, if there's a person who we don't like we are always put with that person.*

***Pupil 3**: I think it should be 60% chance to the teacher to be involved and 40% for us. I think it's a bit more important for the teacher to choose because the teacher will normally know who you work with and the best way that you can get education and that's what school's for.*

***Pupil 4**: A bit like John, If you don't want to go with someone, it's a bit annoying.*

Slightly younger children expressed the following views on the matter.

***LC**: If I said to teachers children must always choose would that be a good or bad thing?*

***Pupil 1**: Good.*

***Pupil 2**: Bad. Well if you always choose, it could be a wrong decision. Maybe you'll work horribly together, maybe we are silly and maybe we just don't connect.*

***Pupil 3**: I think… well… half and half really. Sometimes they have to choose and sometimes you have to choose.*

***Pupil 4**: I think it's a good idea if children would be able to make choices and it would get them ready for the outside – when they're grown up. If you choose for them, when they're older, they won't be used to making their own choices.*

***Pupil 5**: I don't think nothing really. (Brief prompt from LC) I think it's good. Like Kevin and Sunil weren't allowed together only 'cause they are a bit loud and it's called discussing and like… it's helping each other. They're discussing things to, like, work on something they want to do. Like, I think it's a good idea.*

***Pupil 6**: I don't think it would be very good actually because I think if the teachers choose a little bit and then we choose a little bit then it would be fair. But if we choose all the time, it would get a bit boring.*

The children expressed very balanced views and were able to justify these. The importance for practice is that pupil voice highlights an aspect of teaching that it so often missed in the context of a busy classroom and an over loaded curriculum. One of the most significant issues raised by the children concerned choices and routines around group dynamics. Yet this is something that tends to be a feature of teaching for organisation purposes, or to promote collaborative skills more generally; the focus tends to be organisational rather than educational. Very rarely do the social dynamics of group work feature as the primary learning objectives in lesson planning – inquiry approach or otherwise; group work is often the vehicle by which prescribed knowledge is imparted or consolidated. The processes actually underpinning group learning are rarely the focus of teacher attention and action. According to the children, they should be. Most learning is done with others and "In the context of social partners and material resources that amplify and modify our own accumulated capabilities and dispositions as learners (Wells & Claxton, 2002, p22). If all learning is social (Smasorkinsky, 2007) and the purpose of schooling is to promote achievement (Hattie, 2008), the children have a point!

(3) Choice Must be Genuine

Choice must necessarily be a feature of teacher action and it appears, from this data analysis, that children are happy for this to be a shared venture between teacher and pupil. In promoting a model of effective learning that is dependent on positive teacher pupil relations where the former have autonomy to lead the curriculum, Lumby (2001, p7) describes it as "The aim is to make it possible to continue learning and to do so independently, that is, not alone, but in making choices about what, how and with whom to learn." When they are not given a choice at all, the children report that they feel devalued. If choice is to be an important feature of learning, then teacher action needs to ensure that it is not just some areas where the children are afforded choice –perhaps those that are considered less important within the big picture. Children's perceptions around the value assigned to areas where they are being given choice are extremely astute. As the following interview extract taken from a conversation about choice with eight year olds illustrates.

Pupil 1: We are given some choice about where we sit. If we talk we…

Pupil 2: Sometimes it's not helpful. We don't choose in very important lessons, we have to get on with our work.

Pupil 3: We do less work if we are given a choice because we talk.

Pupil 4: If we've got an inquiry project, we can choose how we learn and what we want to find out about. In other lessons you don't choose.

Pupil 5: I like being given the choice. I like a choice because if you don't like a subject, you can choose your favourite subject.

Pupil 6: I don't think it's fair if you don't get a choice.

If children are expected to engage in at least five or six hours of learning per week in the core areas, they very quickly learn to recognise that these are considered to be of high value within school. If, through teacher action, choice is prohibited in these areas then the children quickly learn to view choice as tokenistic in the sense that their decision making capability is not considered worthy enough to make choices when it really matters. As Noddings (1992) reminds us, we cannot legitimately enter into a dialogue with children if the choice has already been made. This can have a detrimental effect on the potential positive benefits of giving choice in the first instance and also send very powerful messages to the children about how much their engagement in the learning process is really valued. If children are to be given choice then it needs to transcend all areas of learning. It can equally be a partnership between teacher and pupil that embraces foundation curriculum areas as well as those areas that are considered to be important thus deemed the core curriculum.

The children appreciated the involvement of teachers who chose to work through the dimensions of choice with them. They expressed a preference for being allowed to learn from their errors around social choices suggesting that if they are given advice then they need time to learn to correct their behaviour – to learn to cope with distraction. The demands of the classroom can often result in teachers assuming control for a child's distraction by removing it, or the child, from the situation. The children seem to be asking for patient teacher action where they are given a degree of time to learn new skills and attitudes in a social setting. They ask that they are given some opportunity to correct previous errors and be allowed to work with pupils where the social dynamics have resulted in unsatisfactory outcomes. If the social and emotional conditions within a classroom allow, this becomes a real possibility without compromising the need for a calm and self-disciplined environment that is clearly a requirement for all children to make progress.

Children and Choices – The Implications for Leadership

Giving children choice most certainly serves to motivate them and imbues them with a sense of value. To ensure that choice addresses some of the issues that children identify with and also contributes to maintain or raising achievement, leadership action must necessarily focus teacher's attention to the nuances and social dynamics of choice in a learning situation. In summary, this research suggests that leadership action needs to encourage teacher action in the following areas.

- Offer a degree of choice to the children because it secures high levels of attention and perseverance from the children. They report that they need to feel happy in their learning; a measure of choice makes them happy.
- Consider the children's capacity to make choices and initiate voice activities that generate feedback following consideration of the potential difficulties that the children may encounter.
- Discretely teach skills and attitudes associated with decision making and provide opportunities for the children to make real decisions relevant to their learning.
- Consider using techniques from Philosophy for Children to encourage the continuous development of decision making capabilities.
- For instructional purposes, only limit some aspect of children's choice and try to avoid being overly prescriptive in the subject area that children focus on for inquiry. This is particularly pertinent for younger learners.
- Offer opportunities for building trusting relationships; this is possibly best addressed in the first instance away from formal learning situations.

- Recognise the challenges that the children face with regards to the social dimension of choice. The children need adult guidance in this respect and their views about difficulties need to be listened to, handled sensitively and strategies to problems solves in a social context provided. Role play can be very useful in this respect.
- Explore intergroup dynamics with children and plan activities that place social development outcomes and the main purpose for learners' engagement. Identify specific skills and attitudes that assist the children in politely asserting themselves in a group situation.
- Ensure that choice is not tokenistic and only afforded when the decision is not really important; this can be detrimental to the children self-esteem. Work towards a classroom ethos where choice is an integral aspect of all areas of learning.

The Role of the Teacher

According to the children's views and from observing their learning behaviour, there are essentially two important aspects of their teacher's role. The first is the kind of experience that their teachers afford them in planning learning opportunities and the second is the teacher's role in establishing and maintaining the social and emotional climate of the classroom. For the purpose of clarity, the key ideas associated with affordance are emphasised in italics.

(1) Affordance

The kind of learning experiences offered to the children inevitably contributed to the degree of interest that they showed in their learning. Motivating features of affordance identified by the children linked to *active, practical and suitably challenging learning opportunities.* The children showed an appreciation for the *quality of resources that was provided for them* such as books, computers and construction materials. They enjoyed visits, outdoor learning and expressed a preference for an organised environment where resources were easily accessible and cared for. The children also talked about the kind of reading opportunities provided for them and felt the need for more choice around this in some cases. The quality of reading resources and organisation for this was important to them. The children also appreciated the opportunity to freely choose how they were *recording their ideas and enjoyed using different formats to present and explain their learning.* We saw many imaginative and exciting outcomes when the children chose their own methods of recording. The following humorous extract illustrates the children's creative ideas with recording.

***LC**: If you are given free choice, how will you record your work?*

***Pupil 1**: I would get a big round pizza. Probably get brown sauce and ketchup and do a pie chart.*

***Pupil 2**: You can just take a photo and then eat it after.*

***Pupil 3**: If you like take a photo, it's still there.*

The children did actually produce a cardboard pizza to record some data that they had collected as part of an inquiry project.

Observation of free recording within the context of the lesson indicated that a greater proportion of boys tended to steer away from written records. Writing frames proved to be a useful tool to support the writing process during inquiry so that all children felt more confident in using writing as a form of recording. Similarly, teacher action that reduced their own talk and provided talk frames to facilitate presentation enabled the children to produce some quality outcomes and enhanced the level of children's discussion about thinking and learning.

The importance of allowing children to talk and the effects of teacher over talking has been previously addressed. The development of children's language for and through inquiry is very important. Teacher action needs to ensure that opportunities for children to engage in *productive social interaction*. Friendship groups are more likely to provide a context within which children can share knowledge and challenge one another, but learners also need to engage in exploratory talk (Howe & Mercer, 2010); suitable adult intervention can promote this. Additionally, teacher action needs to be mindful about how children perceive the role of talk in learning; some of the children tended to assume that talk was 'naughty' and not something favoured by teachers. Routines and protocol around talk need to be explicit so that the children learn to differentiate between impolite interruption and lack of attention and suitable interjection and talk for learning.

Observational records indicated that the children found, as one might imagine, handling large quantities of written information difficult. *Discrete information processing skills* teaching in this respect became important. Children needed to learn to evaluate the credibility of the information that they were handling, as well as utilising the skills of deductive and inferential reasoning generally associated with the reading process. This required teacher action that drew attention to specific skills at an appropriate time and using language prompts to move learning forward. Through discussion, the children indicated that they were sensitive to one another's views about their work and ideas. Teacher action that provided suitable language starters for the purposes of evaluation was necessary to enable the children to comment constructively to each other. This eventually became integrated into our evaluation framework in the form of phase linked suggested sentence starters. Opportunities to focus children's attention to different aspects of the inquiry process also became necessary. For example, when commenting on one another's inquiry presentation, children

tended to address the quality of the presentation rather than the inquiry process taken to get there. All of this required (and still requires) reflective and perceptive teacher action to facilitate the children's development of language. The school is still on this journey and it is part of our evolving practice.

Children's *ability to think* was also highlighted through inquiry learning. Irrespective of their prior levels of achievement, children who were proactive in their thinking, and willing to persevere to solve problems, seemed to cope well with inquiry learning. The importance of thinking seems to be widely acknowledged within British education but there is a need for teacher action to consider how thinking skills are explicitly taught. It seems that thinking skills are more successfully integrated into some areas of the curriculum than others. The idea that children need to learn to think about thinking – metacognition, is supported by inquiry learning, (Burke et al, 2007). Through talk, teacher action needs to ensure that they gain an insight into children's perceptions about thinking and how they construct meaning from this.

It has been argued that good pedagogy should aim to *secure links with the child's immediate learning environment and wider context*s that they experience. In this respect, connections between teachers, learners and the focus for learning can be made (Thorpe & Mayes, 2009). Sharing things from home was important for all of the children, particularly the younger learners. Teachers need to provide learning opportunities that are relevant and meaningful for the children. Some commentators would extend this further and argue that the curriculum needs to tap into the distribution of skills and knowledge in the children's local community - 'funds of knowledge' that are accessible. In this sense children are viewed as active participants in the learning process (Moll, 1988; 1992). In relation to the need to be fully inclusive of all children, affording children relevant learning experiences is vital. Inquiry demands that children bring their own imagination to the table; this will inevitably be guided by their prior experience. It is important that teacher action recognises and values this prior experience so that we avoid the pitfalls of a deficit model of cultural poverty. Thomson (2008) reiterates an important point from her earlier work in stating that children bring 'virtual bags of knowledge, experiences and dispositions to school' but that schools only draw on the some of the children's talents. The children participating in this study implied that home links were very important to them. They certainly expressed a value for attitudes expressed at home and the contribution that families can make to their learning.

There were mixed feelings about the idea of being given homework, particularly as it detracted from time that could be afforded to other home activities. The children tended to express a preference for *home learning that involved a*

practical link such as: making models, IT based problems, posters, research or cooking. In response to the kind of opportunities that supported their learning at home, most of the children expressed a preference for a quiet location with access to practical resources, books and computers. As with discussions around the curriculum, the children seemed less concerned with the actual content of homework opportunities provided, but more concerned with the relationships and dynamics around home learning, and the kind of feelings that this evoked within them. The following exchanges with nine and ten year old children illustrate this point.

***Pupil 1**: I like choosing my own projects but I didn't really like the time when we were just given a sheet of maths to do. But if you can do your own project then you can enjoy. I did a chocolate project with my mum once and she's going to take me to 'Cadbury World' because I did it very well.*

***Pupil 2**: 'Mathletics' has helped a lot, playing live, that competitive thing is a good idea. It makes you want to get it right.*

***Pupil 3**: I'd say the same, 'Mathletics' has helped a lot and it's easier to do on a lap top or computer and I don't like sheets that much.*

***Pupil 4**: My favourite Kind of homework is choice and Design Technology.*

***Pupil 5**: I like doing the inquiry because I'm really interested in… It's really helpful for me.*

***Pupil 1**: Sometimes we don't get the full amount of time in the week to complete it.*

***Pupil 6**: Sometimes I am really busy in the days on Wednesday and Friday and Saturday and Sunday because I play in tournaments.*

***Pupil 2**: I'm only free on Mondays and Tuesdays and on Tuesdays I go to Dads and he won't help me. So really I've only got Monday and he hasn't set it up.*

***Pupil 6**: There's only one day I'm free.*

***LC**: Should you be given homework do you think?*

***Pupil 1**: No, as if we don't get six hours of hard labour at school.*

***Pupil 3**: I'd be pleased but then there would be disadvantages because it's sort of extending your learning.*

***LC**: Would you prefer to keep homework or let it go*

***Pupil 1**: let it go*

***Pupil 2**: Let it go*

***Pupil 3**: Let it go because all of the homework that you can do out of school, you can learn it in school.*

***Pupil 4**: I'd let it go as well.*

***Pupil 5**: We do loads of work in school because we're such an advanced school.*

***LC**: What's the best way for parents to help you?*

***Pupil 2**: Well… like helping with homework. I always have to do it at mums because dad won't help me with homework. He says you can leave it till later.*

***Pupil 1**: My mum and dad went to Cambridge and they're encouraging me and she said 'Well you're heading the right way for Cambridge' and I said why's that? And she said 'It's genetically in you' (laughs). She's sort of encouraging us.*

***Pupil 3**: My brother said that when he's older he's going to earn lots of money. He said to me 'Now I'm a role model for you and you've got to be someone who earns lots of money.' And I said 'No, I don't.'*

***Pupil 4**: Of course it matters that parents set high expectations for us.*

***Pupil 5**: I don't really like people telling me how to grow up. I want to grow up how I want.*

***Pupil 4**: Life's an adventure.*

***LC**: Do parents guide you through?*

***Pupil 3**: Sometimes*

***Pupil 5**: Sometimes my brother helps me, he's like a role model because he's older now and he goes to school and he's doing his GCSEs and he say they're hard, or they're easy now. I'm a little confused.*

***Pupil 2**: You know you said about setting high expectations, dad wants me to be a pilot but I can only be a pilot if he helps me with my school work. I really want to be a pilot in the military and you need good grades to do that but dad won't help me with my homework. But he's got me into the idea of doing that.*

***Pupil 5**: Well they taught me and my dad, because I got into a local football team and he really wants me to keep it and if I can, I can play for the local team when I'm older.*

***Pupil 4**: My parents definitely encourage me and stuff, they're very supportive.*

***LC**: What about when they are practically helping you with your homework; what advice would you give to parents?*

***Pupil 4**: It's a bit like Cliff and Yvonne, sometimes my parents could give me an example like write down the same sort of question and show you how to do it. Sometimes my mum doesn't get the maths and my dad's busy.*

***Pupil 1**: I hate it when my dad does it because he's very mathematical. He always does examples. If you say 'dad can you help me?' he says 'Let's do another one.' After that he goes 'So, let's do another one - AxBxC divided by E = what?' I say 'I don't know'.*

***Pupil 5**: I think parents should do half and half, they shouldn't tell us the answer, but they should try to help us.*

***Pupil 2**: Like I said, my dad not helping with my homework. He doesn't help me but he has already paid over £100 to let me fly a plane. I won't make it if I don't get the grades.*

***Pupil 5**: If you believe in yourself you can do it.*

Teacher action in relation to parental involvement often affords homework opportunities as a strategy to accelerate pupil achievement. The contribution that parents make in this respect is difficult to precisely define as it can be influenced by a number of factors such as the child's ability, resources within the home, parent mentoring skills and the kind of involvement strategy that parents use. However, research does suggest that parental involvement allows them to positively impart beliefs and values around school and learning and influence children's ability to self-regulate and organise themselves. Parental engagement that supports children's autonomy is effective but over controlling behaviours can have a detrimental impact of the child's motivation and achievement (Pathall et al, 2008): the children's voice would support this. Teacher action that reinforces assistance with self-regulation and offers advice to parents about promoting children's self-direction is advisable.

What appears to be important to the children is not so much the kind of opportunities afforded to them but the *values and intention that underpin these opportunities*. This extract clearly shows that, due to practical constraints, the children express a preference for not having homework but they do recognise how it can contribute to their future progress. There are many other examples of interview data that illustrate this more precisely. The most powerful message from the children's voice concerns the values that their family transmits to them and how this, in turn, reflects the value for education within the home and, indeed, the value for the child. The curriculum is expected to afford children a range of learning opportunities. In the same way that affordance within school can determine the child's approach to learning, it is the values that underpin affordance – the intention behind curriculum opportunities given that seems to be crucial to the children. This place that this is most evident for the children is in their perceptions of the way in which their teachers create and maintain the social and emotional environment within the classroom.

(2) The Social and Emotional Climate

In order to create what they term 'a thriving garden for children' Eichsteller & Holthoff, (2011, p33) suggest that practitioners need to provide children with "a fertile environment conducive to their wellbeing and learning, developing their inherent resources and connecting them to their surroundings." The authors go on to suggest that learning needs to start from where the child is at and the role of the pedagogue is to facilitate opportunities for learning. The ideas inherent within this emanate from the principles of social pedagogy. This is an area that is discussed in greater detail in chapter seven. I doubt if there are many children

that would disagree with the notion that learning should begin with them. My in depth discussions with the children strongly support this.

In commenting on one of the most successful educational systems in the world, in the sense that equity and standards are high, Whelan (2009) suggests that the Finnish system is able to attract and retain the 'right kind' of people into teaching. However, he also goes on to assert that having high attainment in the subject that one is teaching does not necessarily make them a good teacher of it. In my experience as a primary teacher and a leader in a primary setting – I would suggest that the most important features of a primary school teacher's capacity to influence the learning of young children is the values and beliefs that they bring to their work. The way in which the vast majority of practitioners in this study generally interact with the children, would suggest varying degrees of awareness in recognition of the need to establish a social and emotional climate conductive to learning. This however did not emerge in any sense as an overt issue that the staff felt the need to concern themselves with. This was in total contrast to the views of the children.

Teaching is a really challenging role; every aspect of a teacher's actions is subject to close scrutiny from the children (and, indeed, the wider society). The following discussion is not intended to add to this burden, rather to see what we can learn from the voice of the children to direct future teacher action. As I had an agreement with the children to omit any information when they specifically requested that "I don't want this repeated", I have not included any reference to some of their direct comments about the relationship that they felt their teacher established with them. Neither have I included references to this in relation to views about their peers if I was asked to omit them. In general, I found the children to be refreshingly honest in their discussions, appropriately sensitive and remarkably fair in the delivery of their views.

There was a lot of discussion from the children around how they are perceived by their teachers. The children were able to articulate very clearly how different groups were organised by adults for the purpose of learning, and how this related to prior achievement. There was a strong sense that all children should be treated fairly irrespective of their current levels of achievement. The children made reference to the right to choose irrespective of ability; how adult support time is allocated and, as previously discussed, how adult assistance in afforded. The way in which *rewards were allocated* by the teachers was also the subject of scrutiny with the children asking for consistency in how these are allocated. The children recognised that some adults are quicker to identify and celebrate achievement than others. An eight year old describes it in the following way.

***Pupil 1**: When she doesn't give out credits, I know this sounds strange, but you feel like you are useless. Because if no one's got them you feel like, if none of us have done very good, there's no point in having them. I think me and the rest of the class have improved very well to a higher standard… and you just feel like you've done all this hard work for nothing.*

The most important element in adult child interaction appeared to be *how the teacher responded to them on a daily basis*. This included the recognition that they were afforded for their learning and the teacher's management of things that are potentially threatening to the children. These aspects of the teacher's behaviour were instrumental in creating the social and emotional climate of the classroom. Teacher action was important but their use of voice and language was also considered extremely powerful in determining the children's perceptions. The following extracts taken from interviews with eight and nine year olds illustrate the children's views on this matter.

***LC**: How do you feel talking about your work?*

***Pupil 1**: If you say something to the teacher like 'Can I have some help please' and they just shout.*

***LC**: Is that all teachers?*

***Pupil 1**: Just some of them.*

***Pupil 2**: When a teacher asked me to share my work, I felt all embarrassed.*

***Pupil 1**: I don't mind talking to you about my work but some teachers they don't like to talk about it.*

***LC**: What does an adult need to be to help you to talk to them?*

***Pupil 3**: Helpful, friendly, someone amusing, they need to be quite open minded and not, like, if you say something, like, shout! They can be strict with the people that are naughty but not, like, strict if you're not doing anything. I think it helps if they have a little bit of a sense of humour as well.*

***Pupil 4**: I like someone who, if someone's being naughty they get told off and not everybody else.*

***LC**: What kind of teacher helps you best?*

***Pupil 1**: Well I think a person that they are kind to me, when I've done something wrong. I like them because of their qualities, they don't get stressed with you, they just help you and explain fully and sometimes you don't get it when they tell you and explain fully and sometimes if you don't get it when they tell you and you don't get it again, they will sit with you for a little while until you do.*

***Pupil 2**: The teacher I like is always being nice and they only shout and tell you off when you've done something really naughty or really bad, not just for no reason. I like a teacher that if something had happened with a helper, they'd find out more about it instead of blaming them.*

***Pupil 3**: A nice one but a strict one, when someone bad's done something.*

***Pupil 4**: I agree with Justin.*

***Pupil 5**: A nice one but not too nice. When somebody is naughty, they have to be very strict. Someone who is nice but when they talk they don't 'lower it up'.*

***Pupil 6**: Someone who is kind but when someone punches someone or does something like that.*

***Pupil 4**: The teacher who I'm thinking of is really nice but she is really kind, so she's entertaining – she does fun stuff. She's actually someone quite funny, who I like.*

In discussing the kind of teacher they need to learn best, the older children responded with:

***LC**: What kind of teachers do you need to help you to learn best?*

***Pupil 1**: I think our teacher because he involves everything.*

***Pupil 2**: I think a teacher who lets us choose.*

***Pupil 3**: I think a teacher who is quite relaxed about what type of work people do and if they don't do enough, they try and encourage them to do more*

***LC**: Do you think that when teachers are threatening with you it helps or makes you less motivated?*

***Pupil 4**: It makes use less motivated because we get nervous and shy and we don't know if we need to write more or better sentences – every word is like is this going to be okay.*

***Pupil 5**: Umh.. well to be honest, I like all kinds of teachers but with some, maybe I'm not into cause… I like Mrs Lane, she's very nice but she seems to be doing a lot of art. I like art but sometimes it's boring and sometimes it's fun.*

***Pupil 6**: I like our teacher, he's the ideal person.*

As the above extracts illustrate, the emotional relationship between the child and the people responsible for managing their learning environment is very important during instructional interaction. Teacher's actions may serve as a barometer of the values, beliefs and practices within their classrooms. This in turn can influence the way in which emotions are regulated and the kind of motivation and cognitive behaviour displayed by children (Meyer & Turner, 2002). Inquiry can not only be risky teaching, it can also be risky learning. As previously discussed, children require a 'safety strap' (Barth, 2007) to enable them to take risks with their learning. If they do not develop a *trusting emotional relationship* with their teacher, they are unlikely to be prepared to take risks. They will not talk about their learning; they feel reluctant to ask to help and they are less motivated. Similarly, if the child does not feel that an adult can intervene and help to maintain a safe social order within the classroom, they will be equally reluctant to direct their own learning. The way in which teachers *set social expectations within the classroom is considered to be important* to the children; this is particularly relevant when they are placed in risky situations where they giving each other feedback or sharing their ideas.

Inquiry learning expects children to engage in a lot of peer interaction and feedback, so it is important that practitioners are mindful of this and intervene as necessary. The following interview extract illustrates this point.

***LC**: How do you feel about sharing your work with each other?*

***Pupil 1**: Sometimes, If feel I've done a really good piece of work, I like to show it to the class but otherwise I like to show it to people that might be interested.*

***Pupil 2**: I feel okay about it but like Colin said, if I don't think people are interested, I will just go to people who are interested.*

***Pupil 3**: I like it like Colin. I like showing it to the class. If you show it to a group, all they want to do is get on with their project – they're not interested. You never get time to show all that you've done. I like it when you get to show the whole class because some people appreciate what you've done.*

The idea of *children being responsive to each other* was evident in a lot of the observations of inquiry. The children initially seemed safer when talking or presenting in a group situation that was being managed by an adult; this was often in the context of a whole class situation. This assured them of the respectful attention of others. The children also expressed some concern that the children might tease them whereas talking about learning with most adults provided greater predictability. The teacher's role in establishing a safe climate and explicit behavioural expectations around sharing of ideas is paramount. The children's interactions are loaded with personal sensitivities and insecurities. In this sense, they are more likely to spend more time worrying about the social and emotional perceptions of one another, than actually learning anything about the subject matter which provides the initial focus for the interaction. Of course, interaction is a part of life and the children need to develop resilience in this respect. However, if children are to contribute to one another's achievement then this process needs a scaffold. As the children became more proficient with inquiry and more familiar with the need to discuss and share ideas, groups required less adult intervention. A focus on developing inquiry attitudes helped to facilitate this process because it made expected attitudes for inquiry explicit to the children. The following extracts illustrate the children's concerns.

LC: How do you feel when you are talking about your work?

Pupil 1: I feel a little embarrassed because if you say something like 'I think you could just improve, tweak that a little bit.' That's talking to other people (not adults). If they think theirs can't be improved, they are just boasting which I don't like. If you share work maybe you should not comment on your work just theirs.

Pupil 2: I don't like talking about my work because I usually talk with John. Sometimes it's hard to tell John what he needs to improve on because I don't know what level he's meant to be on. I don't want to offend him.

Pupil 3: I don't feel comfortable about that because of some clever people on high tables. If you have to read it out, I feel embarrassed.

Pupil 4: It really helps.

LC: How would you choose who to talk to?

Pupil 2: Maybe the people at the same level as you instead of me talking to John because it's a lot harder for me. It would be a lot easier for me if I was with Dennis because we are at the same level.

The children have high expectations of their teacher's capacity to understand them. They expect their teachers to be able to interpret their behaviour, responses and different ways of communicating. It is also important to recognise that the children do not only express their emotions through speaking. The *use of body language appeared to be powerful* when the children were trying to send messages to their teachers, as the following interview extract illustrates.

LC: How do adults know if you are enjoying your learning?

Pupil 1: Well sometimes you can tell by your face or if you are slouching or something like that. Sometimes maybe the work you produce.

Pupil 2: The thing about the slouching, you do get told off, they can tell if you are not really doing it.

Pupils 3: Teachers do know if you like it or not because if you like it, you want to interact a bit more. Say if you've got a question about history and you really like history then you'd put your hand up a lot more.

Pupil 4: You know the bit about slouching, that's one thing and the other thing is that sometimes if you don't do enough, you have to do it in your own time. I think it's a bit cruel. If you don't like something and you don't want to do it, you can't force them. Well we have to do it but….

There was a strong feeling among the children that teachers should be sensitive to them. This was not presented in a self- oriented manner, in that many children made comments about how their teacher treated children other than themselves and discussed the fairness of this. There was a sense that teacher action and response to children generally either provided a cloak of security, or the possibility of threat and humiliation. If the teacher was able to establish this trust, their feedback was welcomed and valued by the children and they acted on advice. If the children were dubious of the teacher's decision making capacity and felt that their action was unfair, this seemed to override every other aspect of the teacher's intention – however honourable. If children feel that they will be embarrassed, they will never risk being wrong and will lose the powerful capacity to learn from error.

I can personally recollect my French teacher standing me in front of the class to recite a string of verbs which she knew I had not learned. The next two years of

our relationship were fraught with challenge. At the end of the first year I obtained 100% in the test. She commended me on my improvement at which point I promptly informed her that I just wanted to demonstrate that I could do it if I wanted to. My desire to please my family ensured that I merely turned up for the following year's lessons – I never did learn to speak French! Trusting relationships with children matter; I applied my own experience to my practice as a teacher and continue to see the relevance of this as a leader. Sometimes we just need the children to remind us.

There were so many ways in which the children liked to be treated and they were able to recall numerous ways in which their teachers supported them. Essentially what came across was related to the *children's sense of security or avoidance of embarrassment or humiliation*; they wanted to do well and be seen to do well. A particular concern of the children was that they should be invited to share their work and engage in dialogue rather than 'being put on the spot'. They favoured teacher action that prepares them to talk about their ideas and set this expectation from the outset. As the following interview extract illustrates.

Pupil 1: If you don't want to share it then I think you should not. You should be invited to share.

Pupil 2: If you say 'Who would like to come up?' If we put our hand up the teacher should choose the people who have their hand up, not down.

Pupil 3: You shouldn't be told to put your ideas forward because you might want to keep them secret so people don't use them so that it's a surprise. If you write it on the board some people might use your same sentence that's really good.

Sometimes in our desire to push standards and force pupil engagement, we can easily forget how challenging and frightening the social context of the classroom can be for children. Without the existence of trusting relationship between the majority within the classroom, it is rather like going into a party of strangers on a daily basis – dreadfully fear inducing. If an adult responds negatively to the children, this negative attitude simply overrides the children's perceptions about everything within the learning environment that the teacher is maintaining. The distinction between correcting behaviour and developing a positive approach to learning needs to be taken as one. A *teacher's emotional management needs to be consistent* and everything linked back to the integrity that is afforded to every individual. Teachers need to allow the professional to stand back and reflect on the way in which their actions and verbal communication are being perceived by the children.

The children were not only vocal about the adults' role in setting the emotional climate of the classroom; they also specified the *expectations that they had of one another*. They felt let down by children who had not contributed fairly to

group work. They felt irritated by children who wasted their time because they had not prepared for a presentation adequately. They expressed frustration if another child wasted their time because the teacher had to repeat explanations for their benefit because they did not listen the first time around. The children also commented on other children's capacity to cope without adult direction and abuse of the trust that their teacher had shown in them. There was a strong feeling that if an adult acted with trust and integrity then the children should follow suit.

The importance of emotions in learning has become increasingly recognised. This is highlighted by the inclusion of this in 'The Primary National Strategy' initiated under the New Labour Government approaching the new millennium. It is suggested that there is a distinct link between emotions in the classroom and the learning behaviours of the children and their attendance. It is also suggested that calm classrooms are delivered by practitioners who can recognise and manage their own emotions effectively (Primary National Strategy, 2005). A teacher's social and emotional competence significantly contributes to the maintenance of supportive relationships and effective classroom management. This, in turn, helps to create a healthy classroom climate that contributes significantly to children's emotional, social and cognitive outcome (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). As humans we are complex beings therefore it is not the responsibility of leadership to emotionally manage each adult – this is the individual's responsibility. However, just like it is the responsibility of the teacher in guiding and securing a social and emotional climate that is conducive to learning within the classroom, leadership action should secure this for the adults within the organisation. This would support the notion, that regardless of the kind of structures that schools innovate in their desire to promote achievement, the strongest forms of schooling are characterised by trusting relationships led by practitioners who are professionally connected and supported (Kaser & Halbert, 2009). Leadership should also draw practitioner attention towards the emotional needs of the child and provide instruction regarding ways that this might be achieved. Leading pedagogical relationship within the school context is afforded a greater deal of attention in subsequent chapters.

Before closing this chapter on pupil voice, the one area highlighted by the children as a embodying all of the values underpinning their approach to learning, choice, affordance and the social and emotional climate of the classroom is display. It was this interconnection that very probably made it such a prime area of concern for the children. Because of this, the children views about display, within the school context, is addressed as a specific theme.

Display

Every group of participants, irrespective of age, made specific reference to the use of display within the school. As a teacher researcher and a professional practitioner, I can honestly say that this really surprised me. It was the persistence that the children demonstrated in making their voice heard on this matter which was something that I had not experienced or ever truly acknowledged throughout my own professional journey. I had always recognised the value of display in celebrating achievement, communicating information and in creating a supportive physical learning environment. What I had not anticipated was the perceptions that the children hold in relation to the power dynamics within the classroom. Neither had I previously identified the impact that display has on children's sense of worth and in shaping their approach to learning. As McGregor (2007), in commenting on the way in which classroom spaces embody and ideology of education and pedagogy, argues "It is the interaction between the physical, social and organisational environment that create particular spaces for learning and support different types of relationships" (McGregor, 2007, p17). For the children, it is display that is a key component of this process.

Display is one of the overt mechanisms that a teacher can use to represent the kind of opportunities afforded to their learners. It can also be a forum for teachers to demonstrate their effective skills in action – the outcomes of good teaching (Thomson et al, 2007). In providing recommendations for teachers in relation to display, Clayton (2002) suggests that display needs to be meaningful, connected to the curriculum, honour effort and not just perfection, reflect the efforts of everyone in some instances and remain fresh and uncluttered. In this respect display can afford opportunities for the children to reflect on their work. As the following extract illustrates, some of these strategies are reflected in the views of the children.

***LC**: What kind of displays are helpful to you then?*

***Pupil 1**: I think it's to like have a range of things because when you come and you just see one thing it's kind of boring when you can have all different ranges of stuff.*

***Pupil 2**: I like the idea of teachers putting up our work in the corridors for the 'The Gallery' because; I'm not sure, oh well wait… In Saint Thomas where I was before there wasn't much work up, there was just facts everywhere but you never had the time to look at them. But seeing other peoples work, people are actually doing something.*

***LC**: Do you learn more from your friends and peers in the classroom than just adult displays?*

***Pupil 3**: I think that if you have somebody in the class that you are friends with, just a bit cleverer than you, it's easier because you always go and ask them, they can help you.*

***Pupil 4**: I like this one because it expresses our work and if we have visitors come they can say 'you can see shipwrecks, you can see about the facts.*

The youngest pupils participating in the group interviews made the following comments.

***Pupil 1**: Display needs changing but this could be hard for the teachers.*

***Pupil 2**: Display with words is very helpful because they help with spelling. I think that display should come down now because we are not really learning about this now.*

***Pupil 4**: I like this one because everyone is up there and if their work is not up you might feel a bit sad. It is important that everyone's work is up.*

***Pupil 5**: They might love theirs more than anyone else and they might feel left out.*

I recently walked into to a primary school with a teaching colleague to be greeted by an imposing display of children's work at the entrance. Realising that I am a primary practitioner, my colleague curiously asked me why all of the children had written on the same photocopied frame and why their work was of a similar length. I laughed and suggested it may have something to do with the controlling nature of the teacher that led the exercise. My colleague persisted, 'No really why?' I believe that she genuinely thought that it was some kind of challenge presented to the children a bit like a haiku poem – could they get all of their ideas in a specific frame? The handwriting was neat, the words were correctly spelled, the children had used some sophisticated vocabulary and display was colourful. There was an element of quality, clearly guided by the teachers but nothing of the child at all. This is in total contrast to the teaching practice of the colleague accompanying me; this prescriptive way of working with children just did not feature on her radar, she could not relate to it. Sending messages to visitors, or indeed the parent community, can be a powerful application of display. This particular school clearly wished to demonstrate values about rigorous learning and traditional values – quality? This however, can be an accountability trap that negates against the development of the child.

Display is, no doubt, a useful mechanism for communicating messages about the work of the school and the kind of aspirations that the school has for the children – it can be instrumental in helping to communicate the ethos of a school. Bragg (2010, p23) aptly describes ethos as "Ethos is official and unofficial, it emerges from everyday processes and norms of relationships and interaction. It is perhaps intangible but has to do with the feel of the school. It emerges from the material and social aspects of the environment and is continually negotiated. Ethos embodies values and visions of society." For the purpose of my discussion I will accept Bragg's (2010) comprehensive description of ethos. Display can also reflect the historical traditions of the school. In this respect it can significantly

facilitate one of the functions of the leadership of the school, that of image management. Display is also very powerful in communicating messages to children about the kind of learning that the school wishes to promote and the quality of work that is expected. Children are rewarded for good work by putting it on display and this is assumed to provide the impetus for further good work (Thomson et al, 2007). If display has a powerful function in communicating the ethos of the school, leadership action needs to be very careful about how display is managed within school. The interviews with children suggest that they are very sensitive to the messages that the school's display policy sends about their learning, as the following extract illustrates.

***LC**: Who should decide who sees your work?*

***Pupil 1**: I think the teacher does it, he only picks the good ones but I think everyone should have something on display to show what they've done. We have all the best art work up there, the same person gets picked but I think I'm good at art – I'm part of this class as well.*

***Pupil 2**: Like Gillian said, when the same art is out on the wall it makes you feel like you're not good at art.*

***Pupil 3**: Yeah because when I had nothing to do I asked could I help and he said 'Yes'. And he said 'Just look for the colourful ones and we put the colourful ones up. I have no idea what he's done with the other ones.*

***Pupil 4**: I had an idea the other day, I thought each class should have a board in the corridor and on that board each person should choose a piece of work that they have done from the half term so that every person in that class will have something on display.*

***Pupil 5**: I think that it you've done a lot of hard work and you're proud of it and it does get put up on the board. Sometimes at the end of the half term you want it back and no one really knows where they go.*

***Pupil 6**: I'm not taking it out on Ms Lane or anything, but I did this massive Shakespeare and it took me all the lesson and it was really good and I spent ages doing it but she didn't put ours up.*

***Pupil 5**: Stuart puts a lot of effort into his work and he never gets his work up and I feel really sorry for him and I think it's really sad that he doesn't get his work put up.*

The children express a preference for a range of work, reflecting different achievements being out on display. They also reflect the equity involved in choosing work. Teacher action needs to reflect this. The children clearly convey a sense that a measure of value for them, and their ability, is being communicated through display. There are also issues about care of their work and there is also a suggestion that the child should have control of their work. The following extracts also demonstrate that the way in which display is handled can have an impact on the children view of themselves as learners and can impair their self-esteem.

***Pupil 1**: When she puts the best up it makes you feel bad about yourself and it makes you feel like you haven't done very good work. I think the best way to learn is to put every ones up so they don't feel left out.*

***Pupil 2**: I feel the same because when they get home some people are actually crying because they feel the teacher may not like their work.*

***Pupil 3**: Well sometimes it's about how much you've done but sometimes it's about how neat you've done it but it depends on what's in the work. Well the best work is, is there lots of information in it or has it just been repeated?*

***Pupil 4**: Instead of putting the best ones up, if there's ten spaces on the board the ten people who finished would get theirs up there and the others next time.*

***Pupil 5**: They normally put this on our work for inquiry to show that you're thinking what you're going to do and things like that I think.*

Leading Non-Negotiable Aspects of Practice

Within any organisation, there will inevitably be variation in practice among teachers and individual value systems contributing to the collective; this variation can sometimes be beneficial for the children in the sense that it prepares them for life outside the classroom. However, there are some things that can be non- negotiable in practice when developing the ethos of the school. Since hearing the voice of the children, I have added display to the list of non-negotiable aspects of practice. Not wishing to curtail their imagination, I had previously left classroom display to the creative flair of the teachers and tended to assume a greater deal of guidance over public areas of the school. This is no longer the case. My leadership action, with the staff, has been to revisit the principles underpinning display and enshrine these within a new policy that reflects the voice of the children (refer to appendix 20). Hattie (2008) emphasises the importance of addressing student self- efficacy before trying to raise achievement; my leadership attention had been drawn to this in relation to display. Changing the value system that some practitioners bring to their work takes time. In this respect leadership action needs to draw practitioner attention to the kind of values that we impart. We are still aiming to reflect the process of learning through display so that the children see the value of all aspect of their work not just the final product. We are a work in progress.

Implications for Leadership

In developing the role of the practitioner, there are many aspect of my discussion that one would hope to see in all learning situations, irrespective of the curriculum. However, because inquiry teaching and learning can potentially present so many challenges, (but huge benefits) teacher attention supported by leadership action must necessarily be carefully directed and responsive to pupil

voice. In summary, to facilitate inquiry teaching and learning this research suggests that leadership needs to support the following teacher action.

- Create an organised physical environment that affords easy access to resources that the children can freely choose.
- Afford opportunities for free recording that allows learners to exercise their creative capability.
- Adopt a "talk less - children talk more" approach so that the children grow to expect that they will need to exchange ideas and engage in purposeful dialogue about their thinking and learning.
- Ensure that routines around group talk are explicit; engage the children in developing protocol around these so that they feel safe with children and adults alike. Consider the ethos which governs feedback and serve as a role model that is sensitive to feelings but remains constructively critical.
- Discretely teach skills associated with processing information and afford opportunities to rehearse these so that they can be utilised in an independent inquiry situation.
- Recognise the importance of the application of literacy skills in an inquiry situation. Rehearse key reading skills and explore how these can be applied in the context of independent inquiry learning.
- Afford opportunities for exploratory talk and provide frames to scaffold this process. Use adult intervention to move discussion forward at opportune moments.
- Encourage learners to think about thinking and engage them in metacognitive exercises. Promote thinking across all curriculum areas and not confine it to particular disciplines.
- Plan learning experiences that start with the children and appeal to their existing 'funds of knowledge'. Ensure that material is relevant and meaningful for learners.
- Recognise the important role that parents make in securing positive values and attitudes towards school and learning and encourage home learning that contributes to the developing the child's self- regulatory skills and capacity to direct their own learning.
- Recognise the importance of the teacher's role in developing a social and emotional climate that allows the children to feel safe and more likely to take risks with their learning.
- Reflect on teacher response to children in all respects and how this is perceived by learners, and the kind of messages that this relays about the value of the child and the role that they should play in their education. Emotional management needs to be consistent to ensure that children feel confident enough to take risks, to be wrong, to be right.

- As social safety and predictability in response is important to the children, ensure that inappropriate responses from children are addressed fairly, and that the children learn to recognise their own power in a social situation and the potential damaging effect that this can have if misused.
- Frame attitudinal expectations for learning contexts and ensure that these are made available and explicit to the children.
- Be aware of children's propensity to communicate non- verbally and consider what this might be inferring in relation to their feelings about their learning experience.
- Agree parameters around the expectation to present or talk in whole class situations. Provide opportunities for the children to negotiate when they will engage in presentation activities so that they have time to prepare emotionally.
- Consider the equity in display policy and the kind of messages that this imparts to children about their learning.
- Provide opportunities for the children to decide when their work should go on display and for them to take control of their own work.

Chapter 6 – The Voice of the Staff

Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapter, although it was evident in many of the teacher's practice, attention to the social and emotional aspects of the classroom was not overtly given the same priority among the adults as it was with the children. The leadership dimension and response to this is elaborated on in chapter seven. As I will show in this chapter, what was evident from discussion with teachers was the importance of the children's approach to learning. Ways in which teachers needed to adjust their technical knowledge and relational expectations to accommodate the needs of inquiry learning was also important.

Through focused group discussions and interviews, the adults also tended to concentrate more on the practical and organisational aspects of developing their daily teaching. Quoting directly from the teachers, in this discussion, I will explore the practical aspect of curriculum change such as planning, specific gaps in teaching knowledge and measurement of progress.

Teacher identity and the perceived role of the teacher emerged as an issue during this time of curriculum change. In challenging existing ways of practice, the teachers also had to challenge themselves as practitioners and re-evaluate what it is to be a successful practitioner. How the school measured a successful inquiry lesson and what an effective practitioner of inquiry 'looked like' was important to the teachers in helping them to secure a new identity. Despite the enhanced capacity to reflect and own their practice, they experienced an element of fear when moving away from recognised teaching methods. Using teacher voice from interview transcripts to illustrate views, the teachers' response to change and their journey through this process is discussed.

As it was such a pronounced feature of teacher voice, this chapter begins by discussing how the external contextual climate in which teachers practice inevitably governs their choices about practice. The kind of pre-service training that they received in preparation for teaching is also influential. In a drive to secure mandated standards, some practitioners initially exhibited a reluctance to diverge from a formulaic model for securing moderate standards. This initially resulted in them often implementing strategies that inhibited genuine choice and was in stark contrast to the children's views on how they should be engaged in the learning process. While all of the teachers could see the validity of offering children real choice because of the high levels of motivation it secured, they needed time to develop practice that they felt not only secured high standards, but also preserved the development of the whole child.

Throughout this chapter, the leadership action required to support the process of change is discussed.

The Standards Agenda

(1) The Context

Public schooling in England has changed significantly from the early nineteenth century, when access to education for the masses was largely dependent on the work of church charities. With the possible exception of training in work houses for the poor, there was little intervention by governments. Primarily reflecting the values of a socialist government, the concept of comprehensive education can be traced back to 1841 when the Chartist William Lovett proposed plans for the principle of the common school. Across the twentieth century, education evolved from a tripartite selective system to one which was intended to erode inequality of opportunity. The egalitarian notion was to challenge the divide that existed between rich and poor. Introduced in the mid nineteen fifties, in an attempt to equalise standards and meet the demand for skills in the changing economy, the comprehensive system saw increasing control and intervention by successive governments of this state provided school service.

In the early part of the twenty first century education operated within a context with where the most recent outgoing New Labour government presented teachers with in excess of three hundred educational initiatives in the first decade of the twenty first century. Intended to fill the gaps in charitable provision, the expectations and working life of the early teachers of government controlled schools of the 1870 are a far cry from the realities of teaching in the twenty first century.

World markets, advances in technology and economic imperatives have undoubtedly had a huge impact in shaping the world, different cultures and societies. The notion that nations are increasingly being drawn together has been interpreted as a globalisation effect (Bottery, 2004). This poses challenges for education. Indeed, a desire to meet these challenges may account for the torrent of educational linked legislation that has been imposed internationally over recent times. The pervasive ideology of changes in technology and the world economy arguably requires schools to mimic the business world, to operate as mini enterprises that emphasise outcomes and efficiency where the acquisition and application of knowledge is paramount (Bottery, 2004).

Just living within a particular society denotes that individuals are subjected to the cultural, economic, political and social conditions that prevail. In contemporary politics educational matters appear to be a focus point for all successive governments in England, irrespective of their political persuasion. This has been

accounted for in terms of the necessity to develop and harness the skills required for Britain to be a contender in the new knowledge based economy (Poynter, 2004). In view of this, it seems inevitable that teachers will be influenced and shaped, to some extent, by the expectations enshrined in the plethora of legislation and initiatives. In tracing the historical development of what he refers to as 'the knowledge society', Hargreaves (2003) addresses this issue. He suggests that teachers find themselves caught up in a web of competing imperatives and interests. Teachers are required to prepare learners to take their place within, and contribute to, the knowledge society, therefore acting as 'catalysts'. In order to prepare for the demands of the knowledge society, minimum cost, standardised solutions tend to be imposed rendering teachers 'casualties' of escalating expectations within a framework that is potentially restricting. All of this against a backdrop where teachers are expected to act as 'counterpoints' for inclusiveness in all respects. It can be difficult to be fully inclusive, foster creativity, ideas and thinking (because the knowledge society requires this more than anything else). It can also be a challenge to meet externally set targets and the emotional and social needs of children. A lot is asked of teachers in a context of ever decreasing resources (Hargreaves, 2003) and a value system that may not remotely match their own or their vision for the learners in their care.

(2) The Teachers' Response

The idea that the teachers are potential 'casualties' of the ever increasing high performativity agenda, and that this has challenged their professional identity (Day, 2011) was strongly supported by this project. Right from the outset, this matter was highlighted through focused discussion with staff in the summer of 2009. At this point, our curriculum had already evolved to remove reliance on the government initiated QCA schemes of work (even as a guide, as they had always been previously used) and the general response from teachers was that the new themes and organisation were positively received by the children and providing a useful scaffold to promote creative teaching. The teachers also reported that the review of the curriculum had encouraged them to reconsider their practice. However, being asked to move away from a standardised approach, supported by an array of government initiated documents, was met with quite a high degree of anxiety.

When discussing issues around the development of an inquiry approach to teaching and learning, teachers openly acknowledged a fear of the unknown. Lack of understanding and clarity around planning emerged as a key area for development. This was not confined to teachers who were new to the profession; it appeared that a particular set of practices had developed and these

were reliant on a standardised approach irrespective of the teachers' length of service. The following extracts clearly illustrate this. They are taken from interviews with three highly effective practitioners all at different stages of their career.

A teacher who is relatively new to the profession discusses the difficulties experienced in moving away from prescribed planning documents; something that had previously guided her teaching. She talks of the previous need to use a structure and a move towards letting this go with less control of the outcomes.

Teacher: *And they were brilliant because they were smashing and they were saying look what we found, I wonder how long that's been there? About four hundred million years and I was.. we only did it yesterday (laughs). They were really in character and that's that play bit as well. They've had the play and they've had a bit of fun and then gone away.*

LC: *It's brilliant, lovely. So what do you think, from your own point of view, what's made the difference? Because you've definitely been on a journey, I'm seeing that myself with you. What's changed in term of ..*

Teacher: *I think that I've realised that I can't predict what they're going to do, what their outcome's going to be. I've tried to keep my planning more open and actually, for this half term, I've planned a lot of the subjects that didn't fit and, Judy said she showed you the big chart.*

LC: That's a really good model.

Teacher: *Because I had no idea of how to do it . We'd had, we kept talking about dinosaurs and I kept thinking I don't know what to do. Because I'm so used to, again from University, following the QCA things. And as much as I don't like actually following the activities, I used them as a structure. And you feel, I felt like, I've got to go by that, I've got to go by that. And now I've started to realise that, I know it's a load of rubbish. But I needed a structure to follow and now I've realised I don't, I don't need to have that.*

LC: *Do you think that is because your knowledge of the curriculum is so much broader now?*

Teacher: *Well yeah and because when I did the chart, I did it the first time with just the activities and I spoke to Judy on the phone and I thought we'll go and put the National Curriculum on another one. And that made me think well actually I've covered all of that. All of that is just from that document and probably a lot more than I'd actually put down. That to me meant more because I knew I'd covered the National Curriculum, not the QCA.*

A teacher who has been in the profession for over six years talks of the experience of moving away from a structure in which units of work were planned over a half term and 'delivered' to the children to ensure coverage. There is an indication that there is accountability to meet standards and a prescriptive structure helps to secure this.

Teacher: *No I don't think it's challenging in terms of ideas because the children are coming up with the ideas almost from where as you're giving them a starting point, you know a stimulus which that's no problem. The challenge is structuring it so that it can run over a seven week block umh.. and that you can hit the standards required which you know you can hit easily through very*

structured QCA based teaching. And also ensuring that the children are accountable for what they've done.

A highly experienced teacher with over twenty years practice discussed the need to manage practice across subjects and gain a greater understanding of how to achieve a balance of creativity and skills. Again there is the implication for a need for structure, for coverage, for accountability.

***LC**: They just repeat what they can already do, yeah. Do you think that, so therefore the model of it should be, yes of course, choice and opportunity, but also you can still take a thinking and inquiry approach to a structured programme. Do you think there's room for that?*

***Teacher:** Definitely and what it said for my own teaching is that I can.. I can start up each lesson in a kind of an open way. The children are generating their own ideas, their own imagination. I can start off in that way. I just need to get my head round unh.. well yeah, how to do it for each subject. But it's changed, altering the way I am teaching, you know uh.. in a positive way but just making sure there's that balance there.*

***LC:** That's the tough… What do you think would help with that balance? You know what kind of things, sort of structures and organisation that needs to be in place to help with that?*

***Teacher:** I think making it clear, we've got it already on the long term plans that make it clear, what are the particular skills that we need to teach each term and we've got them on the medium term plans and also the long term plans. In this term you need to be teaching instructional writing, or whatever it might be. Unh.. and as long as those are clear and people are addressing those skills and focussing on those skills and that those skills are monitored, I suppose, I think it should work out quite well.*

(3) The Challenges of Change

Elliot (2001) argues for greater scope for teacher input to organise the curriculum; this research would suggest that capacity to engage in this process needs to evolve within schools. This study suggests that teachers have become accustomed to receiving a curriculum and their professional identity and perception of accountability seems to be tied up with this. The subjective realities of the teachers were evident and this change process (Fullan, 2007). They were changing their approach to teaching but, due to their professional history, still retaining the belief that the curriculum needed to be structured in a particular way. This required leadership action which created opportunities and permissions to challenge the heavily prescribed approach to the curriculum.

The tools of the curriculum were shown to be important to teachers (Spillane et al, 2001). The whole issue around planning for inquiry remained a focus as our practice evolved and continues as a priority to this date; this has included existing teachers and the induction of new staff. In their endeavour to maintain high standards of teaching and learning, the teachers have clearly identified planning and organisation as a powerful tool to assist them in their everyday

practice. The notion of moving beyond our perception of the curriculum in terms of subjects and what is taught within these has been challenged. The idea of bringing a leadership vision supported by strategic and structural support seems to provide a more comprehensive way of restructuring than that which is presented to young learners. The reality under existing contextual conditions is that leaders of schools are required to work from national curriculum frameworks externally negotiated and realize these in some meaningful way in local contexts (Burton et al, 2001).

The leadership relevance of this, in terms of managing curriculum change, is that in delivering a vision and working out from this, the realities that contexts place on the very individuals that we rely on to deliver this vision must firstly be understood. It is necessary to acknowledge the needs of those involved in the change process. If there is a need for structure and a belief that it is required, then a structure needs to be established – a different one. In delivering the vision of an inquiry based curriculum, the first leadership action was to replace existing structures with ones that, not only promoted the principles of inquiry, but also accommodated the demands of the National Curriculum (refer to appendix 16). This was to provide teachers with a safe scaffold from which they could then eventually 'risk' other aspects of their practice.

Interestingly, the National Curriculum in itself was not considered by teachers to be restricting. It seemed that the accompanying advisory materials and the general context in which they were required to work were more influential in determining the teachers' mind-set and approach. The National curriculum has been subject to criticism due to the lack of an explicit framework for developing teaching and learning. This might suggest that, as previously discussed, teachers may feel that if they are only judged by results, the outcomes justify the process (Elliot, 2001).

The idea of asking teachers to change, who are already securing standards that place learners' performance in the top 1% nationally (as measured by current national indicators), is very challenging. No one ever overtly said it but I half expected someone to cry in disbelief (and possible frustration) "what more do you want"? On reflection, if we are only to be led by the political thinking at the time, they would have had a very good point. The mandated standards agenda emerged as a primary concern for the teachers at the beginning of our journey through inquiry. Although teachers could see that the children were responding enthusiastically to inquiry and their motivation was tangible, Focus Group discussions repeatedly indicated that many teachers held the belief that an inquiry approach may compromise existing standards; this was supported by individual comments that the teachers made in private interviews. The following

semi structured interview extract conducted in the summer of 2010 illustrates this point.

***LC** : But I suppose, the difficulty for you then with inquiry is what? We know that the children enjoy it?*

***Teacher:** The difficulty for me is keeping, kee.. if you are the kind of person, who everyone here is, they want high standards, the highest standards and you don't want to accept anything less than that. I think perhaps initially you are going to have to accept that, perhaps initially, the quality of academic learning isn't going to be as high as the quality of whatever the other word is learning is – social learning – learning, learning. How to learn.*

At this point in the discussion the teacher refers to standards. There is an implication that standards are externally imposed, are premised on cognitive assessment and that an inquiry approach to learning is a potential threat to this. As the discussion ensues, the teacher is beginning to evolve their own understanding and unfold the beliefs that they currently hold about standards and how this relates to their practice. As Sergiovanni (1998) notes, people's actions are influenced by what they believe.

***LC:** Well, it's an interesting point. So therefore, for you what does the modern curriculum look like? What should it look like?*

***Teacher:** I think, I think it should look like having the opportunity to deal with real time issues that are going on right now. So at the moment it's the world cup. So whether you're interested in football or not there's so much cultural stuff that you can learn out of it or history of Africa or the apartheid stuff and treatment of black people - huge stuff. And actually watching some of the world cup I've learnt things about when Mandella was in prison, because they do little snippets. Or whether its umh… the humanitarian stuff in South Africa. At the moment the stewards are going on strike because they are using the world cup as a tool because they've got a hold over the authorities so they're going on strike and the bus drivers are on strike. So how do the fans get around which makes you wonder about the Olympics, what, you know are the train drivers going to go on strike or the airports or whatever. So I guess that, you know.*

***LC:** So in terms of, I mean you're going to be in this business a long time, you've got probably another 30 years in teaching. So where do you see it going?*

***Teacher:** That would be a fantastic way of.. kind of reactive teaching because you don't know what's going to come; you don't know what you're going to be teaching because it depends what's going on in the news. But you kind of have a, in fact that's given me ideas. You could have kind of a, this is the framework that we work within,*

***LC:** But the stimulus changes?*

***Teacher:** And that's completely planned, well as far as you can, but they need to be able to demonstrate that they can describe physical human process and this but then as a teacher you need to pick the on-going current affairs issue.*

Towards the end of the conversation, the teacher arrives at a new way of thinking about standards. The professional dialogue provides him with a

different perspective to direct his practice. Again, there is attention given to the need for structure, for the planning framework to be there; it is just one that is not prescribed, it has evolved from the teacher's creative thinking.

This extract clearly highlights some of the issues that the teachers encountered at the outset our curriculum change. There was tension between current practice, external expectations, the need to maintain standards and the desire to be creative and imaginative with their teaching. Although the idea of a centralised curriculum is not without many strengths; not least because it lays out clear expectations for all children irrespective of their social and economic starting point, there can be constraining elements that negatively impact upon the learning process for children.

The teacher featured in the interview extract presented above went on to 'risk his practice' and implement some of the strategies that he imagined during this dialogue. He discovered that he was successfully able to engage the children by using contemporary issues as a stimulus and secure high levels of achievement and attainment both in terms of concrete examples of children's work (as he may have secured through more formal and traditional methods) and in terms of their inquiry competencies and approach to learning. It is very difficult to secure the latter, positive learning behaviours, if a linear learning process is rigidly dictated to children. What this reflective teacher rapidly became aware of was the process of teaching and learning, and his role within this, required attention. His colleagues arrived at a similar understanding. This realisation was to have an impact on how the teachers perceived their roles as practitioners.

The Role of the Practitioner

(1) Listening to Oneself and Others

In discussing the new relationship between schools and school inspection processes, initiated under the New Labour Government in the new millennium, John MacBeath (p71, 2006) comments

"Pupils merit no special status as against the voices of teachers or parents or others who have a right to be heard. Schools are places in which there are many voices which carry, and carry in differing bandwidths."

Aside from the fact that I believe the voice of children has been largely ignored within many educational spheres and that, in England, we very much operate within a predominate educational culture that still 'does education *to* children rather than *with* them' (Rudduck and Fielding, 2006); I would support MacBeath's (2006) assertion that we have a lot to gain from considering the views of significant parties within our schools. In respect of teaching practitioners, due attention to their voice and perceived capacity to fulfil their

professional role is a moral and practical necessity. At the outset of this project, it was the voice of teachers that was given initial priority in determining leadership action. This was undertaken in the assumption that, in order to effect change, the people who would ultimately be responsible for effecting this change needed to own the process and feel adequately prepared to lead the children through an alternative educational journey. In my own journey to leadership, I had frequently witnessed teachers being treated as passengers in the change process and yet held highly accountable for the outcomes of this change.

To some extent the whole process of identifying a need for change began with me examining my own internal teacher voice, and the kind of role that I felt I was developing as a leader of teachers. Through practices that elevated both adult and children learning as core principles of the school, we had already secured a high measure of success in relation to academic achievement. As a leader (and foremost a teacher) however, I felt that we were beginning to lose our way. In our endeavour to maintain the high standards that we had created and to cope with the immense pressure of expectation being imposed through external evaluation, I felt that we were losing site of the whole child. This was confirmed to me by the children when I had the opportunity, through my research, to take a really close look at their views. As Hextall & Mahoney (1998), in discussing school effectiveness correctly assert, an effective school is not just about academic achievement but the need to consider life skills, personal development, independent thinking, the creation of well- rounded people and, most importantly for me, a love of learning. As described by Alexander (2008), teaching is an observable act but is influenced by pedagogy. Thus teaching is informed by the purpose, values, ideas, assumptions, theories and beliefs held by the person engaged in the act of teaching. As someone who came into the teaching profession to promote all of these things, I began to feel that the school which I was leading no longer reflected my values as a practitioner – the things that I had always strived to achieve within my role in the classroom – my pedagogic principles.

(2) A Matter of Control

The focused discussion sessions, initiated at the outset of the project in 2009 proved to be highly informative in gauging practitioners' response to change and in identifying further action required as it provided an on- going professional dialogue between myself and the teachers. This was further supported by individual interviews. It quickly became evident that the teachers, in trialling different approach to inquiry, perceived their role as changing; they acknowledged that there was a necessity to move towards more facilitative

strategies and allow the children to assume an even greater deal of control over their learning. Many teachers reported that there was a significant shift of control where the adult was handing over a greater degree of responsibility to the child – a more responsive approach. Therefore the role of the teacher became more concerned with how to enable the children to assume greater responsibility. A degree of anxiety was reported to be associated with this, as it raised uncertainty about what an effective teacher of inquiry looks like. Teachers were keen to have a clear understanding about how their practice would be judged if they were externally evaluated. As the following extract in 2010 from an interview taken a year after the start of the initial project indicates, references to external evaluations were being made.

The conversation was focussed on why some children repeatedly ask for assistance and reassurance from adults and led to a discussion around teachers' anxieties by the interviewee.

Teacher: *Yeah, yeah. But I also think something that will be interesting is whether umh.. people above where we are in school, say your SIPs and those people who ultimately have learned their trade in older schooling, if they come and see a lesson that is inquiry based…*

LC: *Will they understand it?*

Teacher: *Exactly. Because, for example, the science lesson that I did, there were loads of flaws in that, loads of things from a technical, purely teaching point of view I wasn't happy with Umh.. so you can pick all of those out as flaws, as a Ofsted Inspector maybe. Or if you were forward thinking you can say okay I can see what they are trying to achieve. I think, yeah, and a lot of children, I've got a few examples in there who will constantly come up to you and say, you know, is this right? Am I..*

In attempting to hand over a greater degree of control to the children, as they develop a greater understanding of this process, this teacher identifies 'flaws' in their practice. The teacher is clearly referencing this to a perceived model of what practice should look like and infers a kind of external control by which they may be judged. The conversation continued…

LC: *I wonder why they do that? I wonder why children do that because I find that quite interesting but I don't know why they do that. I have asked them why they do that.*

Teacher: *I think in terms of, I think adults as well in terms of the inquiry, and this is not fault of your own or the training, I'm not convinced yet that people are entirely sure what an inquiry lesson looks like.*

LC: *I don't think they are.*

Teacher: *I don't think you can be, you can have a lesson that's got elements of these things.*

My leadership response to this was to avoid providing a model of inquiry teaching at this point. Aside from the fact that I did not have a suitable one at my disposal in the first year of the project, I specifically wanted the teachers to

participate fully in evolving new practice. To secure the quick and effective induction of newly appointed teachers, I eventually produced a booklet, based on the practice we had developed, that would guide practitioners when they were new to inquiry. This was done with the understanding that the curriculum and practice was under constant review and newly appointed staff would be expected to contribute to any changes in our evolving practice.

(3) The Need to Take Risks and Trial Ideas

Teachers also identified the need to be able to risk in their practice; this was a strong theme running through their discussions. They recognised a need to present learning to the children in different ways but needed license to experiment with different approaches. To accommodate the concerns of teachers, it also became necessary to suspend judgements in relation to their practice that was based on externally prescribed criteria. I have always been of the belief that a number, a word or phrase to put a value judgement of an individual's capacity to teach is of little use in developing their practice in a holistic way- outstanding, or good; one or two what does that mean? Diagnostic dialogue, directly linked to the activity and learning behaviours of the children, coupled with strategies for improvement, have always been more effective in developing teachers' competency for me. That is not to say that the external criteria used to judge the effectiveness of teachers should not be used, because they will at some point be externally evaluated using this criteria (it should also be made available for teachers' reference). I believe it should be used very sparingly as it does little to promote the self- identity of teachers and ownership of practice – it is merely a summative overview of where they are at a particular point in time as their practice evolves. As Varga-Atkins et al (2009) point out, teachers' ownership of continuous professional development is linked to how much they value it in the first instance. Additionally, in times of initiating change and asking a teacher to risk their practice, it seems wholly inappropriate to then judge their practice against set criteria. As teachers became more confident with inquiry teaching and strategies became embedded in their practice, inquiry expectations were embedded within a frame that incorporated external criteria for making judgements about the quality of teaching (refer to appendix 17).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the teachers did not overtly identify the National Curriculum as problematic in limiting the strategies that they elected to employ within their classroom. Cooper and McIntyre (2002), commenting on the complexity of teachers' response to the National Curriculum in England and Wales, assert that there is a tension between teachers view of themselves as critical professionals and the prescriptive nature of the National Curriculum. They argue that 'craft knowledge', that tacit knowledge which teachers acquire

throughout their professional lives, can often be stifled or lack articulation because the prescriptive nature of the centrally led curriculum leaving little space for collaboration and consultation. While my research does not necessarily support this particular strand of their thinking, there is was a strong sense of teachers' views of themselves as professionals and their ability, or willingness to challenge 'received authority' emerging from the data.

Cooper and McIntyre (2002) further assert that teachers willingness to challenge dictates, such as those provided by the National Curriculum, is closely linked to their implicit view of themselves as being actively engaged in curriculum development and the creation of practice. The teachers overtly acknowledged that they were in the process of developing new approaches to their practice. Having experienced leadership in a number of schools in challenging circumstances, my own 'craft knowledge' would suggest that the failure of schools to raise standards was closely linked to staff's incapacity (or lack of opportunity) to assume responsibility for curriculum development and associated practice. When a sense of fear pervades, there is a tendency to rely on the 'take it off the shelf' or 'you tell me how to do it' approach – this is simply not sustainable and will impact on future developments within the school. I suspect that there was already something about the way in which we elected to implement the National Curriculum that led teachers to consider that they had an appropriate measure of control over it; we had always kept curriculum content under review and teachers were fully engaged in this process. However, asking teachers to further challenge themselves to readdress, not just the content of the curriculum, but the very way in which the content is implemented, did prove emotionally challenging. This required leadership action that promoted a culture, as Troman and Woods (2001, p142) describe it "a culture of learning by problem solving would be one which it was acceptable to admit mistakes and to see them as opportunities to learn and not as an indication of professional incompetence." As the following semi-structured interview extracts illustrates, leadership action that allows teachers to trial ideas and, possibly, make errors is beneficial. It is important that teachers see the value of error and how this can ultimately develop their practice. This proved to be crucial in empowering teacher as active participants in developing pedagogy that recognises the importance of inquiry learning.

***Teacher**: And I think naturally, inside us, we want to have the right answer. You know it's very difficult to put yourself out there to fall down isn't it. Unless you're wearing..*

***LC:** Safety pants (both laugh).*

***Teacher:** Exactly - with knee pads. I think that if I was teaching in a.. with a project, I would make sure that there are safety nets around so it's okay. There's different strategies to deal with falling over isn't there.*

LC: *That's a good point actually.*

Teacher: *I don't know how, without thinking about it further, but that's where I would think as well. How is that dealt with within the classroom? I don't know. Teachers don't talk about that really.*

LC: *That's a really good point. It's interesting really that whole ideas of how do you pick yourself up and what are your mechanisms for coping with hurdles.*

Teacher: *Yeah. Or how do you know that you fell over? Do you know you have fallen over? God you could go on and on. (laughs). So that's the philosophy.*

LC: *Maybe we can address that. Maybe that's something that we need to address. I'm going to write that down so that I remember it.*

Teacher: *(Laughs) Okay. That could be a whole staff meeting couldn't it Lorraine, about how do people, especially the people we are as teachers, because we have to be organised an in control and, in a management side, so we don't want to fall over do we.*

The above extract clearly illustrates the teacher's recognition of the need for herself and others to get it right; there are evidently fears about taking a risk with practice. This has implications for how leadership presents the idea of teachers as learners, people who are entitled to learn from error.

Another discussion with a teacher of a young class of children comments

LC: *So, the 56 million dollar question. What's your experience of developing an inquiry curriculum been like so far?*

Teacher: *Umh.. a sort of like a journey (laughs). A very rocky journey to start with. Umh.. Initially, you know I didn't get it. I don't know what I didn't get but something didn't make sense but now I think it… it's I've seen that the children are more engaged with it, that I don't feel so umh.. unsure about myself when I'm teaching like it doesn't have to go the way its planned to it doesn't, you know it can. And I'm sort of got more freedom of what I'll do in the classroom with them so I don't feel so controlled by myself and I let the children gauge it, take it where they want to go as well. I do think it's really beneficial for them.*

There is evidence here that the teacher is trying to move beyond delivering a curriculum to the children and attend to their need for motivation and engagement (Gallagher and Wyse, 2013). She is evidently becoming more responsive to the children and indicates that her feeling about her practice is changing where she is imposing less control upon herself to follow previous patterns. At a later point in the interview she goes on to say…

Teacher: *Yeah, because before I'd always like had it planned and I'd have gone and made a flip chart and I haven't really done that this half term. I've hardly done anything, hardly really used the board for my teaching which I've not, I've always really been so used to doing that. So that made me think I don't always need to be the one at the front. But then I was always sort of think if they don't sit down for long enough is that good teaching? If you've only kept them on the*

carpet for two minutes to say oh well this is what we're going to carry on with. Is that a good lesson?

LC: *It depends what you want out of it doesn't it?*

Teacher: *Yeah and I've started to question well actually if that's… that's.. because sometimes I've thought well, I keep them there too long and I talk to them and that's not really…. and then you give them too many instruction about what you expect them to do. And I know Judy's found that quite hard as well because I've been like we'll do this. Well, shall I get this ready? Shall I do that? Shall I prepare that? And I've been like no - just leave them, let them do it. Because why should we have to go and cut the paper and do all that stuff when actually..*

LC: *They can do it.*

As discussed in chapter five, the children reported that they lost interest and felt less motivated when teachers talked too much. Alexander (2008) suggested three consequences for children when teachers over talk: they may not learn as much; the children may not sufficiently develop narrative; explanatory and questioning powers to demonstrated understanding and teachers lose the diagnostic element of teaching thus remain ill-informed about children's levels of understanding. This teacher's shift in pedagogy is therefore likely to have a positive impact on her practice and in turn the children's response to her teaching. What is evident within this extract is the willingness of the teacher to reflect honestly on her practice, take risks and to alter it in response to the children.

(4) Supporting the Work of Teachers – Professional Identity

Harris (2003) makes the point that successful leaders invest in training and development which has an impact in developing the social capacity in order to build the capacity to improve. Research suggests that teacher leadership, the process by which teachers influence their colleagues, is most effectively developed through a combination of work related contextual professional development and opportunities to collaborate within the school and beyond the classroom (Hunzicker, 2012). In relation to teachers developing a new professional identity, one of the most effective training opportunities that I provided for the staff was Philosophy for Children. Funded by a grant from the Local Authority Extended Services budget, I organised and co-ordinated training alongside seven other local schools that were invited to join us. Among other things, entering into a philosophical exchange with learners, allowed teachers to identify how to hand over intellectual control to the children without feeling that they were losing control. This helped to alleviate teachers' concerns regarding their perceived responsibility for standards and general classroom management and organisation. Additionally, working alongside local colleagues to explore one dimension of inquiry, the philosophical, allowed the staff to collaborate and

exchange ideas beyond their immediate context. This was to contribute to a gradual change in the kind of teachers that the staff considered themselves to be. All staff, teaching and learning support, are now trained to teach philosophy to level 1 and some have moved beyond this. We also continue the collaborative work with some of the schools involved in the initial training.

We now know a lot about how teachers teach and become educationally effective and, in recent times, how they think within the classroom, but we know much less about how teachers feel (Hargreaves, 2003). Jakhelln (2011), suggesting that it is vital for schools to move beyond just the social wellbeing of staff, makes the very pertinent point that the emotional dimension of teachers work needs to be included in the development of professional relationships. In combining emotional and cognitive resources, Jakhelln (2011) maintains that teachers will be able to develop an important knowledge source. As the following extract illustrates, through conversation, the teachers were able to articulate their own concerns and recognise the emotional needs of themselves and others.

LC: *So you can appeal to their interest. Do you think it's been the same for everybody though?*

Teacher: *No*

LC: *Okay, and why do you think that it hasn't been?*

Teacher: *I think it's because of a combination of control but also concern over standards. For example, only because I've had conversations with Max, so therefore he wants the standards and it's getting the balance right between giving children the choice but still maintaining standards; which I find a challenge as well.*

Once again, there is reference here to concerns about standards and a possible compromise if the children are given greater control and choice over their learning. This was evidently something that the teachers were discussing informally with one another. The discussion continued…

LC: *Yeah, so is.. so do you think that emh.. that if you do inquiry, if you do inquiry you can't have standards?*

Teacher: *No you can, you can if you get the balance right because I think that if you just leave children to run with it there will be children in the class that haven't made progress. Especially when they are given a choice, if they are not working on their own and they're working with other people because there can be an imbalance of work; If you are not facilitating it or engaging it. I mean, I know Max is having…. I was talking to Max yesterday. Five and six do it slightly different to year three and four. Five and six have got separate homework and a separate inquiry; they've got a history inquiry and a geography going on. Umh.. so when they are working in groups with 30 children some are not engaging as much as others. Where as in year three and four, because we have set it for homework they have all had to do something, because it is linked to their homework. That's just circumstances from a conversation we had.*

LC: *It's a difficult one with Max because, I can't get him to talk about it, do you know what I mean. I know that he's got these views but he doesn't take opportunities to express them. So he can't input; he can't effect the change because he's not engaging with it. Do you know what I mean. Although he is engaging with inquiry.*

At this point, Max had demonstrated a reluctance to discuss his experience of inquiry in focus group sessions, although he did eventually elect to participate in the focus groups discussions and the individual interviews. It is clear that his colleague was able to recognise the change process that Max was engaged in as they were experiencing similar concerns. There was also evidently a degree of learning from each other in relation to how learning for inquiry was being organised across the phases and being considered in different ways. The continuation of this discussion, as shown below, infers that this teacher believes that her colleague taking was ownership of his route to change; even if the need for change was not initiated by him in the first instance.

Teacher: *And he is in conversation..*

LC: *He's done really well…I mean his lessons are great.*

Teacher: *And there has been creativity there. I think Max…*

LC: *He doesn't want to commit it to paper?*

Teacher: *No. I think Max thinks, this is what I've got to do and I've got to change slightly to do it but I'm finding my own route to doing it. Possibly.*

This extract highlights just one example of a teacher who found handling changes to their practice challenging. There were many more that manifest themselves in different ways. One member of staff was always blatant with me and just kept reminding me that she simply did not 'get it'. Already an able practitioner, capable of securing high levels of attainment, Max (the subject of this exchange) eventually went on to deliver the most impressive inquiry lessons and integrate inquiry strategies into his practice generally. Through his own willingness and courage to embrace change, he can now secure even higher standards across the whole range of learning, including the social and emotional approach of the child. In an informal discussion over two years after the initial outset of this project, Max thanked me for challenging his thinking and felt that his teaching had greatly improved. I had always admired him as a teacher and felt a little uncomfortable and unconfident about asking him to change his practice to an inquiry approach, particularly in the early stages when I was unsure about whether it would actually be effective. My own feelings were exacerbated when he appeared to be retreating emotionally; although he was more than willing to trial new initiatives.

What I did not recognise in the initial stages was that it was likely that this was Max's way of managing the emotions that change was evoking; he was creating a new teacher identity for himself and as an already successful practitioner, he had the emotional capacity to do this. In recognising the importance of socio emotional competence in teaching, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) point out that, training that enables teachers to develop capacity to emotionally cope will ultimately have more beneficial outcomes for learners as opposed to developing curriculum competencies alone. As a practitioner well versed in the emotional demands of teaching, Max was no doubt familiar with the necessity to manage his emotional self. As Harris (2007b, p32) notes, "Leading change is a bit like navigating a path through an emotional minefield." I have used Max's journey to illustrate a significant point. An important leadership lesson that I had to learn in facilitating the process of change was to allow teachers to manage their feelings without judgement and, where necessary, remain vigilant and to provide a scaffold to support this process. I also needed to manage my own emotions in this respect.

Day et al (2006) maintain teachers' self –identity is determined by a number of factors including personal history, culture, social influence and institutional values; identity can shift in accordance with changing circumstances. To secure deep, meaningful educational change, Fullan (2007) maintains that teachers need to establish and work with pupils existing understanding, must teach some elements of subject matter in depth to rehearse the same concept, and develop factual understanding and integrate metacognitive skills into the curriculum. It is inevitable that engaging in this process may result in a temporary lapse in confidence or in teachers feeling deskilled while they establish new ways of working. Accepting the unpredictability of change, Brooke-Smith (2003) talks about the anxiety of managing change and how the unknown can be disconcerting. He advises that leaders need to establish a 'creativity learning zone' and identifies practitioner research as an important element of schools in the twenty first century. This research would support the notion that teachers need time to explore new ideas.

An aspect of providing a scaffold for teachers' practical and emotional support was created by the research design. Focus group discussion enabled staff to participate freely in professional dialogue when they felt comfortable. This allowed me to hear their voice and implement strategies in line with their need. This is certainly an aspect of the project that I will retain as part of my future leadership action and will permit attendance at some focused discussions to be optional. This has already been initiated with support staff in the form of scheduled professional dialogue to review difficult issues that arise with some pupils across the year.

(5) Learning from each Other

Husa (2002), raises the ideas that teachers place little value on research enterprise that provide knowledge about how to teach. Rather, teachers prefer their learning to be practical and relevant. It is further suggested that teachers tend to justify their actions and ideas about teaching in accordance with the possibility of being themselves within the classroom. Through discussion and interviews, teachers identified one another as a key to securing the development of their practice. Therefore leadership action, which focuses on the creation of a culture that encourages teachers to learn from one another, was important. In this respect, it was also advisable to avoid setting up any practitioner as the 'knower of all'. In all organisations there will inevitably be teachers who have a more complete set of strategies to secure effective practice, but all teachers have something that they can teach others. Depicting individuals as 'lead teachers' not only deters them from taking risks (I never personally rated the excellence teacher model. Is that not that what we all aspire to be?), but it also tends to undermine the positives in others practice – it can be divisive. A culture that encourages all teachers to become learners and to take responsibility for collaborating with others to develop their practice was most effective for us – a kind of open door policy through respectful negotiation. Additionally, leadership action which encourages all teachers to take an active role in monitoring standards in subjects or area leadership teams contributes to the notion that the development of practice is everyone's responsibility. One initiative that we piloted was an open week where all teachers visited each other's classrooms in pairs and provided generic and depersonalised written feedback to guide future practice. We will retain this strategy to help us to continue to move teaching and learning forward.

(6) Mechanisms to Create Understanding

I shall include a final comment made by an interviewee to close my discussion on the teacher's role. This extract highlights the importance of leaders understanding their staff both professionally and personally, and instigating effective feedback mechanisms such as: informal chats; professional dialogue; effective performance review; diagnostic lesson observation and a genuine open door policy. An attitude that is interested in the emotional person is required. Also, a necessity is general social interaction that allows leaders to understand the needs of the teachers and the likely difficulties that they may encounter throughout the change process. In discussing the stress that teachers often encounter as a consequence of their chosen career, Troman and Woods (2001) make the point that low stress schools are places where there is an avoidance of criticism and overload an open, honest and trusting emotional climate. They

further identify that teachers commonly report forms of bullying by Head Teachers where they felt humiliated, marginalised and disempowered. We all manage change in different ways. In leading this, it was important to recognise that, because some staff may encounter difficulties, it does not render them incapable. Aside from the technical and emotional difficulties often encountered through the change process, the teachers also reported that inquiry teaching was physically very demanding. These are vital considerations when managing the everyday lives of practitioners. However personally frustrating it might be at times, as leaders, it is our moral and professional responsibility to identify ways that staff can be professionally nurtured and hurdles overcome. When engaging teachers in the process of change we, as leaders, would be wise to remember the outcomes of Troman and Woods research (2001, p145) "Our research suggests that that one of the main impacts of teacher stress is the profound change in the 'self' involving reduced personal and professional confidence and lowered self-esteem."

The following extract, taken from interview data, explores the challenges that teachers can encounter through the process of change and how this can create tension and dilemmas.

LC: *That's really interesting. Do you think then the more, something more valuable is coming from the child?*

Teacher: *Definitely; it may be harder for the adult to assess it, monitor it and then evaluate it because you've then got thirty or thirty one brains thinking something slightly different and all maybe going in tangent but I haven't seen it managed so that the adult can be fully aware of what those 30, 31 children are doing but if it's adult led you lose, particularly the low ability, you generally loose those and the high ability and you end up with just the middle ground following you.*

LC: *That's really interesting, yeah. That's what I would expect to see happen.*

Teacher: *Yeah, and I think that's when it has less value. If a child is curious anything that answers their curiosity, their natural curiosity is of value to them so they file it and keep it. Anything that they're doing to please the request that's being made of them at the time, if it's of interest they might file it and keep it, if wasn't particularly of interest they'll do it because they want to please you but then it's gone. And then I think the difficulty is ensuring that they have the opportunity to go deeply otherwise they switch off – what is the point of me going two thirds of the way? If they're still wanting more, they should be given more. But I can see from the adults' perspective how that can be difficult to manage but I have seen it being done so it can be done, it's just learning new skills.*

LC: *What do you think prohibits people from allowing that process to occur?*

Teacher: *Time, it is a crucial one umh… Rigidity in, in methods, you know teaching style, the way you construct your day or construct your classroom can limit. I don't think a valid argument is that resources is a limit because if you plan well, the resources should be available and there should be enough for everyone. Umh I don't think you can say well if you've got a computer for*

three slots in your week then you're, you're because you can do other things, there's other resources that you can use. You can temper them together a little bit. And I think you need creativity and not everybody naturally has that so we're asking some people to do things in a different way to the way they're comfortable.

The teacher holds the view that children will retain information that responds to their curiosity but are less likely to pursue an interest which is initiated by someone else. The implication is that the children may comply, but do not necessarily retain the information offered to them. This highlights a potentially challenging aspect of inquiry teaching. If children are pursuing their own interests, this can be difficult for a teacher to track; they have less control over the process and outcomes. The teacher also makes reference to the practical difficulty in managing this kind of learning situation and the logistics of organisation. Additionally, the need for creativity is touched upon. All of these changes may contrast with a teachers current methods and create discomfort. As Fullan (2007) argues, change whether internally or externally imposed, will involve a measure of loss, anxiety or struggle. It is important that leadership know their staff well enough to identify the factors that lead to these feelings. This dialogue continued.

LC: *Do you think. I mean this is the dilemma isn't it, certainly for me kind of leading adults to facilitate inquiry. Do you think that there is a difference between a natural aptitude to be creative or do you think that you can teach it?*

Teacher: *I don't think that you can invent it if you haven't got it but I think if you've got some, it can be nurtured. But there will be people that do not have it in them. You know, they're so comfortable in another way umh … and it's like teaching them a trick that you can only enhance, you can't put the whole thing it. Does that make sense?*

LC: *It does make sense?*

Teacher: *You, you can nurture it and you can guide and you can encourage but there has to be something there to begin with.*

LC: *So what would be helpful then for new people coming to inquiry? Obviously if it's something they've not been trained in to do, what do you think would be helpful to enable them?*

Teacher: *To see it in action helps. You've got some strong members of staff that really are natural creative people and naturally take inquiry as part of their main teaching experience is that. Certainly I've observed some great practice which has made me either change what I'm doing or.. or monitor what I would do. It's given me ideas that I might not of thought of on my own. I think the seeing and hearing umh.. and an allowance to have a go. They need to be confident that they can have a go. If it fails, they need to be able to recognise where it's going wrong so that we don't spend weeks and weeks of teaching that's not effective.*

LC*: (Laughs) Flogging a dead horse, yeah.*

Teacher: *But to be encouraged to have a go. It's like standing on the edge of a cliff. You know you want to jump, you know it will be okay, but you just need a gentle push.*

LC: *That's interesting isn't it. I think that's something that's come up from quite a few people, just to take a risk and not worry.*

As the conversation ensues, the teacher suggests that, even a creative approach can be nurtured to some extent. There is a clear indication that mechanisms need to be in place to enable teachers to learn from one another. Underpinning this is the requirement that there is permission to "have a go" and learn from failure. This is something that leadership needs to afford; there is a need to create a culture which gives teachers permission to try; to take a risk.

Approach to Learning

(1) Recognising Existing Limitations

"Independent thinking is hardly likely to occur when students are told precisely what they should learn, and what they should think about it. And students are also not likely to improve as independent thinkers when they see teachers themselves being told precisely what they should teach, and how they should teach it." (Smith, 1992, p128)

As previously discussed, when teachers are delivering results in line with that which is externally validated as important, it can be challenging for them to identify a need to change. It was only as we progressed through our inquiry journey that teachers began to see the limitations in the children's approach. It became evident that the emphasis on measuring the success of the children through very narrow parameters was, in fact, inhibiting their opportunities to develop competencies that sustain learning for life. We had always provided 'a broad and balanced curriculum' (as expected) and never compromised the children's entitlement to secure standards. However, as we began to shift the emphasis by changing the expectations of what teaching and learning looked like in our school, and began to 'measure this', teachers began to see the limitations in the children's approach to learning. Additionally, through professional dialogue, we all became more aware of the demands that later life would place upon our learners, our collective or organisational value system began to change. Both the focus group discussions and the personal interviews provided opportunities for the staff to identify a number of challenges that the children were facing. The following series of extracts illustrate what the teachers began to notice once they began to really challenge the children to think and learn independently.

A teacher working at lower Key Stage Two

LC: *What other kind of skills do you think that the children need, that are lacking. If you were to focus on skills over the next couple of years what would you say they would be?*

Teacher: *Umh.. I don't know that name of it but it's almost like umh.. not to just stop at the answer. It's the curiosity factor which I find particularly easy because it's part of my personality*

and some of the individuals, like Tony for example, he's that curious kind of person isn't he. But some of the, I think, the less able children are less curious because that's why they are less able. They're not, they just sit, like you say they are passive, for example but they are happy with their lot. They're happy, they're contented. There is not kind of urge or hunger in them to find out more. Um and I think they need more purpose and I think they need.. I would give them more purposeful learning.

In the above extract it is evident that the teacher is beginning to recognise that some of the children are demonstrating limitations in their approach to learning. At this point she does not have the pedagogic knowledge to entirely articulate her ideas, but is aware that something is prohibiting the progress of particular children. This is outside the academic domain and it is evident from the teacher's comments that the importance of attitudes to learning is becoming prevalent.

A teacher at upper Key Stage Two

LC: *Yeah. Do you think that there are any drawbacks or any difficulties for the children, for any group of children, doing inquiry or anything?*

Teacher: *I think for some children, they find it harder because I think some children like to be instructed and told exactly what to do and umh.. but I think although it might be hard for them to access it, to deal with it, I still think it's important that they have, that they're made to try that independent style of learning otherwise they'll always just wait to be told what to do, you know. I think some people find it easier than others umh..*

LC: *Why do you think that is, why do you think, because some people do don't they, adults and children alike. Do you think it's their previous experience of education or do you think it's just a type or home? Where do you think that comes from?*

Teacher: *It's probably a mixture of everything but umh.. I think a lot of children are more independent at learning and will push themselves and be more inquisitive and want to know more and that kind of thing whereas other children are more passive and think okay I have to learn this today and I'll learn that but you know. So I think making them think about extending their learning, about what else they could find out about a subject, about a topic, you know, is important.*

This teacher recognises the importance that independence plays in facilitating learning and the challenge that this presents for some children. Inquiry demands a high degree of independence; it quickly becomes apparent which children do not exhibit this attitude. This limiting factor is less obvious in more traditional modes of teaching and learning.

A teacher at Key Stage One

Teacher: *To start with when we first introduced it to the children, because I wasn't the one that did it, it was absolute madness. Because the children were so used to being told this is what you're going to do now, you've got to have this and this and this done by the end of the lesson and that's it. But it was an open ended task that we were doing over six weeks and umh.. it was*

quite hard. The first afternoon I though phew this is going to be really difficult. But actually now the children are fabulous. Because last week we just gave them a little thing to do and how they wanted to do it was their choice. Because all you do is, you know where the resources are in the classroom, the extra things we've got are X Y and Z and they're on the step and you just do what you want. You just put everything out for them. Like we make glue stations and things like that, for the stronger glue and things like that so they're not using the glue and messy things around resources and books and net books and things. And they were amazing, they're amazing now and it's so focussed in the classroom.

In the above extract, the teacher clearly identifies the limitations in the children's approach. When not being directed by an adult, the children initially floundered. This was not noted prior to the transition to inquiry otherwise it would have already been addressed. A new mode of working and different expectations demonstrated limitations in the children's approach. What this extract also exemplifies is the importance in scaffolding the learning process. Teachers needed to adjust their organisation and explicitly train the children accordingly. This required patience with the children while they acquired new ways of working and learning.

(2) Patient Teaching for New Ways of Learning

In the early stages of this project, when I was trialling the focused observation schedules in preparation for the pilot work, the thing that immediately struck me was that it was going to be extremely difficult to track the activities of the children. When engaged in an inquiry lessons the children were literally 'all over the place'. In the initial phases of the project, I could see why the teachers were expressing some anxiety about the children's behaviour in the subsequent focus group discussions. From my own observations, it seemed to me that the children were still maintaining behaviours potentially conducive to learning and still respectful towards the adults, they simply did not possess the skills to cope with the demands being placed upon them. The children did not know how to approach the experience of being given choice in abundance. This was something that a number of staff reported during interviews and tended to account for it in terms of, as one teacher described it, 'a hand delivered society', where it was quicker and easier to just tell children rather than encouraging them to find their own solutions.

There is no easy way through this transition; it inevitably takes time for children to acquire new skills. What did become apparent very quickly was that in giving children choice, the context within which this is set needs a scaffold of parameters that is far more sophisticated and implicit than that which is required for more traditional methods of teaching. In an inquiry teaching situation there needs to be much more 'control'; the difference is the 'control' needs to be within the little bodies that are inquiring around the room and not in the

potentially controlling adult. Being already well versed in the benefits of reflective practice, the teachers promptly began to experiment with different strategies, keeping some classroom routines static and constant and introducing change in a gradual way. By focussing on different curriculum areas across the year, teachers were able to gradually develop children's skills to cope when they encountered more open inquiry units.

(3) Finding Solutions for Barriers to the Inquiry Process

The staff identified learners' passivity as a significant barrier prohibiting children's progress through inquiry. Other inhibitors were thought to be children's language skills, the ability to question deeply and the children's ability to process information. Philosophy for children was used to promote deeper questioning and for processing verbal information. The specific skills of information processing were also taught discretely for emphasis. The staff did not tend to pick up on the children's social and emotional skills as inhibitors to the inquiry process. In order to tackle the approach of the children, my leadership action was to develop a system of pupil led assessment, that not only looked at the skills required for different phases of inquiry, but also the attitudes required to secure effective and self-directed learning. This began by asking the staff to describe and explain each of the inquiry skills and attitudes in detail and consider what these might look like in practice. The content of this was primarily informed by focused observations of the children engaged in the inquiry process, and as an outcome of training conducted with staff to explore the kinds of skills they considered valuable within the inquiry process. In order to make the attitudes cohesive and align with our school ethos they were linked to our aims of respect, responsibility and reflection. (See appendix 18). This now provides us with a progression of skills and attitudes to focus our planning and teaching and has been fully integrated into our existing formats for engaging the children in the assessment and evaluation of their learning (see appendix 19).

The idea that we need to pay greater attention to the process of education than only the final product is a concept that really appeals to me. It has been suggested that this may help us to feel a greater respect for independent thinking in learners (Vecchi, 2004). It can be difficult as a leader to keep attending to the process when the product is often afforded greater importance. One of the ways that we began to address this was to initiate leadership action to alter our display policy, so that we overtly gave value to the journey to achieving a piece of work and the thinking behind this. Our changing practice, in respect of display, is discussed in more detailed attention in chapter five.

To facilitate a focus on the process of learning, teachers also planned activities that did not have a specific outcome but required learners to comment on the

process that they underwent in response to their initial inquiry question. Talk for learning also became an important aspect of this, so that the children had the language skills and vocabulary required to discuss and explain their ideas. This led to a school focus on speaking, listening and leadership action that resulted in the formulation of a new policy to secure continuity of practice. We are still very much on a journey towards keeping our attention (and learners) on the process; there are many external pressures that require teachers to demonstrate a quality final product. As the extract below indicates, teachers still feel the pressure to produce a concrete traditionally recognised piece of work even though they understand that a focus on the process will ultimately produce self-sustaining results. The child alone should represent this, but, alas, this is not always the expectation.

Teacher: *Um… I would say that I am a lot more relaxed about it this year but also that it kind of… it's crept in across the year in everything that I've done anyway. So it's definitely had an impact on.. on me. Working with different cohorts, because I've worked with different cohorts as well it's been really interesting to see how they respond, a different cohort responds differently. Um.. the cohort I am currently working with, I've had to do a lot of work but in a short space of time, I actually sat back yesterday and thought ah you have come a really long way with inquiry in such a short space of time.*

LC: *They needed to didn't they.*

Teacher: *Absolutely and they were and that felt great, I looked around and they were all completely engaged in what they were doing they were all learning.*

LC: *What do you think you have done differently, not differently because you haven't had the opportunity, what's been done differently?*

Teacher: *They have been given a bit of responsibility for their own learning and I've had to sort of fight with them a little bit about the fact that they need to actually produce something, it's not a …*

LC: *Yeah*

Teacher: *And I think with the younger years it is harder but I also think that they are, because they have been exposed to it a bit longer, I think that they are going to be really proficient as they go up.*

Although the teacher recognises that the children that she has been working with have developed a purposeful approach to learning through inquiry, there is an indication that there still needs to be a product at the end of the process. At this point, the learning journey and the development of skills and attitudes was not enough for the teacher. The dialogue continued.

LC: *What do you think when people say it's not really something for young children; it's something that only the older children can cope with?*

Teacher: *I think it's harder to be a facilitator further down, definitely umh.. but I think that they will… I think that need to be not so quite as hard on yourself as some of the staff have been because it is a process umh and I think whatever is fed into to them when they are further down is to be, is going to have an impact on them as they go further up.*

Again, the teacher identified the importance of the process and the likelihood that this will benefit the children as they progress through the school.

Reflective journaling also helped to contribute to the children's thinking around the processes that they engaged in and this has now become integrated into our reflective practice on learning more generally. Over two years into the project, my leadership action was to refocus on how teachers provide feedback for pupils. As discussed in chapter five, the children identified this as important, not only in verifying the progress that they had made, but also in establishing a positive identify as a learner. We are currently revisiting response to marking and a glance at the children's books indicates that they will often produce more concrete notes, diagrams, thoughts, reflections etc. than is evident in the final piece. As teachers begin to demonstrate an importance for the process through their marking and feedback, the children also begin to value and see the validity of it.

The teachers strongly identified the children's willingness to take risks as a key factor in determining children's success in inquiry. Children with low self-esteem appeared to be reluctant to take risks and contribute their own ideas. One way that this has been tackled is to coach children within the context of the classroom so specific help is given to secure positive learning behaviours, rather than the traditional focus on getting the knowledge in place to complete a specific task. Leadership action has been to instruct classes to set up 'help stations' where the children can go when they require assistance. The initial difficulty with this is that, learners who require help cannot often identify why and what kind of help they actually need. We are still in the early stages of tackling learners who remain persistently difficult in improving their approach and teachers need to continue to develop the children's capacity to identify their needs. In order to facilitate this process, my leadership action has been to use the outcomes of focused observations and staff discussion sessions to produce an intervention strategy. This is intended for support staff to mentor up to four children over a six week period and intensively focus them on developing attitudes and behaviours that will ultimately allow self-directed learning (see appendix 14).

Affordances

(1) Resources

While there was a general acceptance among the staff that the approach the children take to learning is crucial in determining eventual outcomes, there was also acknowledgement that the kind of opportunities that were planned for the children would significantly help to shape the approach taken. The following interview extract illustrates this point.

LC: *What about resources, are there any additional resources that you think could be helpful?*

Teacher: *You need a brain (laughs).*

LC: *I don't think I can help with that (laughs).*

Teacher: *It's not really, it's not actual resources is it, it's what's in your mind and in your mind set. I can't think of anything that would physically help you. You've got to understand yourself and, like I say, I do understand it but doing it has been a bit of a challenge.*

LC: *Because you are a natural thinker aren't you. That is your way. That is one of the first things that struck me about you is that you thought about things before you actually gave a response – you thought it through. Do you think foundation lends itself to inquiry because of the way it's organised or do you think things need to change?*

Teacher: *Generally it does umh.. because that is it isn't …it's lots of practical experiences for them and different things. I think umh… there must be some practical things for the children. I mean Sally said to me the other day about drain pipes and things. I went wow I will get some them! I was just thinking what they could do with that. If they have cardboard boxes, they really do say, and it is true, if children have a cardboard box, where they take their thinking to- it is not necessarily deep inquiry thinking but they take themselves to a different level with a cardboard box. You know, all of a sudden, it's been joined up, made into a train and before you know it you are starting to talk about other countries, other things. They do it. They almost need blank canvasses really. I think lots of toys and things you get are too…*

LC: *Prescriptive?*

Teacher: *Yeah, too prescriptive; they almost need more blank canvasses. Imagine what you could do with that outside (points to an object inside the room), all sorts of objects like that to actually see how it all…*

LC: *That's worth thinking about isn't it?*

Teacher: *Yeah. There are, that's exactly right – too prescriptive.*

LC: *Curious objects that will force you to think about what you do with them. That's a good point that is. Are you convinced that there are benefits in working in this way with children?*

Teacher: *Yeah, definitely yeah, yeah because you become life- long learners then and that's the ethos of the school. Yeah definitely. With my own children, Robert, he knows I am not going to hand him an answer – it's cruel to be kind really. I don't know half the answers, he used to ask*

ridiculous questions perhaps I should have done inquiry and then I might have known the answers (laughs).

One of the most memorable phrases from the hours of interviews that I undertook as part of this project was the notion of resources as 'blank canvasses'. For me this encapsulates what inquiry is all about, the freedom to imagine – to make connections. It is the reason why young children often prefer the box to the actual toy inside it. There is a strong recognition in this extract that the kind of resources given to children can either restrict or promote learning. There is the idea that attitudes to learning can be developed through how learning opportunities are presented to the children and the kind of teacher expectations that underpin these opportunities.

At the outset of the project, there were initial concerns about access to ICT resources and reading materials; the kind of resources that teachers were already using regularly to deliver the curriculum but felt that these were in even greater demand for inquiry. As a consequence my initial leadership action was to overhaul our ICT provision (expensive I know; we are still paying for it now) and to engage the parent community, through our Library Leader, to acquire texts that linked with the children's identified areas of interest.

As well as ICT and reading resources, there was also a need to draw teachers' attention to the idea that we needed to be imaginative in the kinds of resources that we provided for learners. Some of these needed to be 'blank canvasses' as creatively outlined by the teacher above, while others were about making fuller use of local facilities available to us. As a leadership action, the leadership team provided training for staff exploring ways that we could access and use practical resources. These included ideas like increasing visitors to school; local visits; talks from parents; visits to places of interest; a new experience for the children; increased use of media; job related talks; designing questionnaires; increased use of outdoor provision; use of artefacts; reading in the environment; visits from previous pupils; use of construction materials; theatre visits; shows; news articles; photographic resources; toys and so on. All of these things are familiar to teachers but they tended not to use them as much as could be expected – a reminder can sometimes be helpful. The staff continue to be very supportive of one another in suggesting ideas. We also set up inquiry boards In Early Years and in Key Stage One as a variation on 'show and tell'. This allowed the children to bring in artefacts and images from home and to ask questions of one another – a key skill in early inquiry. Some of these items of interest also provided a stimulus for inquiry homework projects. As the older children became more proficient in inquiry learning, they began to bring in resources from home to support their inquiry questions – we even had a large (dead) fish!

The use of ICT provision remains a focus for continuous development. In the early stages of the project, the teachers had noted that a large proportion of the children passively accepted the information that they were given via the computer. There was very little questioning about the validity or truthfulness of the information that the children were being presented with. As a consequence of this, teachers began to focus on addressing issues around the usefulness of information and to develop the children's information processing skills. In order to secure the safety of the children, my leadership action was to produce a protocol for safe use of technology and make this explicit to the children and their parents.

Rather than just using ICT for research purposes, some teachers made use of our fledgling Learning Platform to engage the children in inquiry discussions; it was also used to survey the views of the children. In 2012, this is an area that we are still seeking to develop; it has taken a huge investment of time and team leadership focus to develop a Learning Platform that will eventually provide a vehicle for further inquiry learning and a means of effectively communicating with our parent community ways in which they might support with this. To secure the future development of this, it has been identified a priority and the leadership team of five all have a significant role in contributing to the development of the platform.

(2) Learning beyond the Immediate Context

One of the issues that emerged through discussion was that teachers felt that the children had a very narrow and stereotyped notion about the world. One of the perpetual questions that emerged was, how can we get the children to ask deep questions if their initial experience limits their creative thinking? In order to broaden the children's knowledge and understanding beyond their immediate experience, the staff indicated that the children needed contact with young people from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Led by one of our Teaching and Learning (TLR) team, a number of really successful projects have emerged out of our work with inquiry. The children partnered with another local school in more economically challenging circumstances, and visits were arranged; this was mutually beneficial for both schools. Our school achieved International School status and was credited with exemplary practice. Pen pals were set up with five countries around the world and the school partnered with a primary school in Jamaica and teachers from both countries have visited one another's schools and the children regularly 'Skype' one another and ask questions about their everyday lives. What was of particular interest to our children is that the primary school in Jamaica has only one computer for over 600 pupils; we have a ratio of almost one computer to every two pupils; that

would make an interesting discussion around practical resources. All of these initiatives have afforded the children the opportunity to become more aware of diversity and allowed them to question their conditions in a meaningful way.

(3) Learning at Home

The culture of the home provides an ideal context for learning because it is, for the child, the only natural and inevitable way to be. Families can serve as a major source of learning for children. Some of this will align with the culture of school so children can learn, through socialisation to master, firstly at home, and then within the context of school, what is required of them to become successful members of school. In other cases, value systems and learning patterns are less compatible (Booker, 2002). One of the issues that emerged with the staff concerned the kind of opportunities that the children are given at home and the way in which home learning is managed by parents. Parental voice was not included in this research; retrospectively that was a significant omission but is now being addressed outside the parameters of the initial research through leadership action to secure the future development of inquiry. It was noted by many teachers that some parents hold very traditional values that possibly mirror their school experience and were heavily focused on outcomes while others unintentionally 'disabled' their children by assuming too much control and responsibility for homework activities themselves. The difficulty with this is that children receive mixed messages and their motivation can be damaged. Although the school provided workshops for parents in respect of inquiry and offer a weekly homework discussion session between teacher and parent; we have yet to achieve a balance. We need to ensure that parents do not set up their view of 'mini traditional school' in the home but can contribute to their child's learning in a meaningful and practically manageable way. The following extract echoes some of the teacher's views about parental engagement in their children's learning.

LC: How do you think generally the children are responding to that kind of approach?

Teacher: The children are better. Obviously a lot of it has been homework based as well. Umh.. I think the children are probably better than their parents are. The parents have probably done what we did initially and gone - oh my goodness this is really hard work and found it alien really.

LC: What do you think they find hard about it, you know the parents, not the children?

Teacher: I don't know, I think they just want to hand deliver everything to the children, you know if the child want to know.

LC: A 'Kentucky' society?

Teacher: Yeah, it really is, it really, really is. I mean I haven't witnessed it so much this year but last year, definitely some of the more able children really, really struggled. You know just tell me

how to spell the word; they didn't want to look for it. The cohort, this time, are really getting good at finding information for themselves. You know last year it was almost like if you looked up and found one of the tricky words on the wall you were cheating.

There is a recognition here that many of the parents were likely to have been bemused about the stance that they should take for inquiry learning in the home (another good reason to have initially included them in this research project). In the same way that the teachers needed to evolve their approach, the same is argued of the parents. There is an implication that some deliver the learning to the children rather than expect them to problem solve and explore for themselves. The dialogue continues…

LC: Yeah

Teacher: You know where as now, these ones, we have sort of encouraged them to go around the classroom. Go out and find it. Look on the wall to see how a letter is formed. But some of the more able, particularly last year, like I say I don't know if it is cohort of if we've encouraged it more. Just show me what a g looks like they couldn't bear the thought that they didn't know and then put their own barriers up. Where as this year it's 'I don't know what a 'g' looks like' 'So where can you find it, where is it?' The things have been out and they are getting more use to finding their own rather than just going there it is.

LC: That's good. What about the parents, what do you think they need? I know you did that inquiry session with them. What do you think would be helpful, what do you think they would listen to? I suppose is what I'm asking.

Teacher: I don't know if I've got the answer for that one. I don't really know because they are all different aren't they.

Towards the end of this exchange, the teacher begins to identify the improvement in the children's approach. Because the teacher has altered her expectations of the children, they are more proficient in finding out. This extract also indicates a need to consider how the school can work more effectively with parents to help them to support learning at home.

Involving parents in their child's education has been identified as important, particularly in the early years of schooling, both in terms of consolidating basic skills and for demonstrating positive values around school and learning. However, if parents assume too much control over a child's learning it is considered to have a negative effect (Pathall et al, 2008). My vision for home learning is to provide parents with an opportunity to contribute to their children's education in a way that demonstrates value, but also capitalises on their parental role. I currently feel that schools can alienate many parents; particularly those who may have had negative school experience themselves. Using practitioner research techniques (although outside the parameters of the data analysis for this current research) my most recent leadership action has been to survey the voice of parents with a view to putting a home learning

structure in place that significantly contributes to the development of the children's approach to learning.

In 2012 there remains a lot of work to do in this area if we are to encourage all families to fully engage with the direction that we wish to steer their children through their learning journey and to enable them to afford their children opportunities that mirror those we are trying to establish within the school environment.

(4) Achieving in Different Ways

It has been suggested that the ethos within a classroom is often confined to discussions of discipline where teaching and the curriculum are considered as separate to matters of discipline (Thomson & Sanders, 2011). The authors further assert that "Creative learning cannot successfully occur in the classroom where there is poor social order, but it can do a great deal to change classroom and indeed ethos by building new relationships, offering new chances for achievement and developing the classroom as a 'village', a microcosm of society more generally." (Thomson & Sanders, 2011, p7). The teachers in this research were quick to notice that they needed to create new chances for the children to achieve in different ways. A number commented on how, in becoming proficient in inquiry, they needed to change their technical approach to teaching in order to create different learning opportunities for the children; the relationships held regarding teacher expectation also began to change. This in many ways highlights the importance of the context in which children are given different opportunities. It is difficult to constantly direct children in the classroom and then, in a discreet lesson on problem solving, expect them to have the capacity to do this – problem solving is more than just a technical exercise. The culture of the classroom, and the leadership of this, is afforded more detailed attention in chapters five and seven.

(5) Affording Real Choices

As previously discussed, I have often felt that, because of the predominance of the high performativity agenda in this country, schools have a tendency to promote the notion that learning is something that is 'done to' children rather than with them. It would most certainly uphold the suggestion that there is a predominance of discourse on *learning* rather than *the learner* and that this in turn reflects how learners are rendered powerless in discussion around teaching and learning. As Lumby, (2001, p5) describes it, "School students are rarely involved in any meaningful way in making choices about the teaching and learning they will receive." Through inquiry, we have certainly made significant inroads to engaging children in the learning process; we have already

demonstrated a strength in allowing pupil choices in relation to curriculum content. As they are becoming more proficient in the skills and attitudes necessary for inquiry, we are also more able to transfer a greater deal of responsibility for children making choices about how they learn. Virtually all of the staff recognised that giving children choice was extremely effective in providing motivation. Whist teachers acknowledged that allowing a greater deal of pupils' choice presented more organisational challenges; they were willing to persevere because of the very high levels of pupil motivation and engagement. The children's perspective on choice is discussed in detail in chapter five. One leadership action that was necessary to secure real choices was to keep asking staff to be mindful of whether or not they were actually offering real choice or just 'paying lip service'. As one teacher describes it:

LC: *So what's the key then? What, why, what's the key? You've seen it, you've got a good idea of how it happens in different settings as obviously I have myself. What do you think the key is, what's different? What's being done differently?*

Teacher: *Listening to the child first. If the adult comes up with the idea and then asks input from the child, you've actually already made your mind up.*

With the demands of a knowledge laden curriculum, it can be tempting to provide the illusion of choice while actually directing the children towards a predetermined outcome. In countless professional discussions, we tackled the issue pertaining to the perceived need to know certain fact by reminding teachers that if all else failed, teachers could simply tell the children –easy, and it only takes a few seconds. The difficult part is getting the children emotionally engaged enough to remember the facts. As teachers became more familiar with the inquiry process, they became less concerned about the knowledge content as they were developing more creative and emotionally engaging ways to ensure that the children retained knowledge if required. The following 2010 interview extract illustrates a teacher's dilemma round questions of factual information.

LC*: The skill set?*

Teacher: *That's a mind- set change.*

LC: *Yeah, so is it the knowledge that's not as or is it the skills that are not as, you know do you see what I mean? What's missing?*

Teacher: *It's the knowledge, yeah it's the knowledge that's going to be missing isn't it - to some extent. But er.. you can always, at the end of the day, of your working towards a science topic that you know at the end of the day, say for example plants, and Max did that and I've done it since they need to know the parts of the plant, well they don't now because SATs have gone, but they do for end of KS2 expectations, umh.. ultimately you can always teach them that as a final, as a separate lesson can't you.*

LC: *So if we were to remove that, i.e. I'm being quite challenging about this in terms of the whole idea about knowledge, if knowledge is transient why do they need it?*

Teacher: *I mean..yeah. Someone said to me, we were doing a pub quiz the other night, and said you know, if pub quizzes are going to evolve to the stage to where it's going to be who can use their mobile phone quickest to find the answer and I though that's a bit like school isn't it because you can find the answer to everything. If they really need to know what a sepal is or a carpal in a plant, they can go and 'google it'. But then that begs the question, well after we've taught them to add up and write properly what else do we do?*

At this point the teacher is clearly evolving ideas about what learning should be focused on. This might be an indication of the knowledge laden curriculum that they have become so familiar with or as a consequence of their own learning history. What is evident, however, is that they are beginning to question their existing beliefs and recognise the transient nature of knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be delivered to children independent of a learning process. In formulating a balanced process and content model for curriculum development Burton et al (2001, p24) also make the point that "For learning to take place, it is necessary to be able to communicate effectively and, for this, knowledge of language is essential." I whole heartedly agree with this. Throughout our journey through inquiry, while there have been strong thematic links providing a context and stimulus for language development, the teaching of English language remained discrete. When discussing standards of achievement, a number of teachers emphasised the need to retain focused teaching for core skills, including language development. As the following 2010 extract illustrates, this was influenced by the recognition to afford opportunities for the children to focus their attention to key skills with rigor.

LC: *And do you think it's important to keep that kind of core set of skills, like in literacy.*

Teacher: *I do. I think literacy and numeracy definitely because without the two of those, the others come crashing down, you know. You can be a great scientist brain but if you can't read or record it will never be recognised you know. And you can go into a loft and be some mad scientist later on as an adult and succeed very well but your school life will be hell. So you know and we don't want that but yeah I think you still have to have that. I do think from seeing how children learn and their energy levels and the fact that there's variable that we can't control, like how they eat, how they exercise and how they sleep effects their day. So I like literacy and numeracy being in the morning. I think we get the most out of the children at that time and although we are quite umh.. vocal in the lunch box, I see a huge difference in the children's behaviour depending on how they eat. And so I think if we had freedom to put literacy and numeracy in the afternoon, we would start to struggle.*

This teacher identifies the need for a discrete focus on core skills; this was reflected by many of the teachers. Although many of the teachers identified the importance of thematic links as a context to develop key skills, they expressed a preference for discrete teaching for literacy and numeracy skills. Rigor in

practice was a strong feature within the interviews as is shown demonstrated by the above extract. Attention is also paid to the whole child and the influence that other factors can have on their learning. Currently discrete teaching in these areas is focused in the mornings; this remains unchanged and was a preference expressed by many teachers.

In evolving a school approach to inquiry, I was keen not to alter too many organisational structures. It would not have been appropriate to take extreme risks with the children's learning in the early phases but I do still retain the belief that some skills are best taught in isolation. As literacy is our lowest baseline on entry, my intention is not to alter this in the future. What we are constantly evolving is our approach to teaching English so that it links to the children's areas of interest and emotionally engages them.

Lessons for Leadership – Taking Action

(1) Leadership Response to the Issue of Standards

Kaser and Halbert (2009) make the very pertinent point that, irrespective of the innovative structures or types of schooling that are developed, the key to developing outstanding learners is linked to the quality of support and professional guidance given to teachers. From a leadership perspective, providing support to facilitate teachers in resolving issues and concerns linked to standards a range of purposeful leadership action was necessary. The follow is a summary of the actions that were taken in response to teachers.

- It was necessary to create a forum where teachers felt that they could honestly express their views and not be harshly judged if constructive criticism was given. This required an ethos where, providing it was politely delivered, all voices were heard. Practitioner research provided this for our school in the first instance but professional dialogue sessions, team review discussion, governor discussions with staff, and voice questionnaires are now formally in place as part of the school's on-going review cycle.
- There will clearly be a set of practices within every school which are non-negotiable. For example, one of ours is that all children will be treated respectfully – nothing less is tolerated and leadership action will be swiftly initiated to secure this. However, there are a number of features of the organisation that require continuous negotiation, the curriculum and the practice of teaching and learning are kept under continuous review. Leadership action is taken to ensure that there is no absolute, definitive approach, where new ideas are disregarded (perhaps because they are not delivered by the more powerful or experienced practitioners; or indeed the government) but that practices evolve in response to children's needs and

staff's continuing professional development and their understanding of learners.

- Medium term planning formats that accommodate the needs of the National Curriculum were created. These allowed the flexible development of skills through free choice content. They also helped to reduce the amount of time teachers spent planning.
- Flexibility in short term planning was afforded in terms of how plans are presented so that individual teachers could adopt a format that best suited their way of thinking and organising ideas. There are planning templates should teachers require them.
- Teachers were encouraged to plan for a shorter period of time, for example only two weeks in advance, rather than across a whole term. Additionally, a brief daily review of intended plans with a willingness to amend as required was actively encouraged. In this respect, teachers could respond to learners' needs and the outcomes of formative assessment rather than delivering a predetermined package to the children. In their endeavour to be organised and handle the sometimes excessive demands of teaching, practitioners can drastically reduce their capacity to secure pupil progress- despite their organisation and hard work. This required brave leadership action to avoid the temptation to produce neatly arranged folders for the purpose of external accountability.
- Opportunities for teachers to share ideas and examine different ways of preparing lessons were created.
- Teachers were 'allowed' to take risks in their planning and not be harshly judged if pupils' progress was compromised for a limited period providing that teachers were willing to learn from error and seek solutions to secure future progress of pupils.
- Opportunities for teachers to team plan on regular bases were provided so that ideas could be exchanged.
- Professional dialogue sessions were scheduled around teaching and learning so that teachers were given the opportunity to express their views, raise concerns and challenge existing structures.
- Mentors for newly appointed staff were assigned so that successful professional practice could be quickly transferred and support mechanisms put into place as required.
- Teachers reported that their preferred method to learn more about practical strategies for teaching was to spend some time working alongside or observing effective practitioners. This was integrated into training schedules and funding diverted for this purpose.
- Training paralleling that of teachers proved to be very important leadership action for support staff. This ensured that they were able to work alongside

teachers in securing standards. This was particularly important for children whose approach to learning required development. Informed support staff were able to pick up on gaps in pupil competencies without the constant direction of the teacher because there was a shared understanding about what they were trying to achieve.

- Importantly, in terms of providing a safe structure for teachers, criteria that related to new expectations and competencies needed to replace existing ones. As equal emphasis was being placed on the process and well as the product, explicit and shared information was provided. It was very important to teachers that they were given a framework as a point of reference. This is something that needed to evolve and was context driven rather than being imported from outside.
- Perhaps one of the most crucial leadership actions was not to 'throw everything up in the air' in the process of change. A kind of 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater 'approach did not seem appropriate. Such an approach may have affected change at a rapid pace but would have been likely to alienate some practitioners and lead to further problems through the change process. There is nothing worse than fear and a feeling of being professionally disenfranchised among staff. As part of our change experience, it was important to retain many practices that were already highly effective in securing standards. This provided consistency for learners and a safety net for teachers to enable them to take risks with other aspect of their practice.

(2) Leadership Response to Managing Change

The following is a summary of findings linked to leadership actions that were initiated to facilitate the change process.

- There was a need to return to the teacher voice within myself and ask whether or not the school I was leading reflected my own personal values and pedagogy or ones what I had received from a system that I did not wholly value. I examined the integrity of my own belief system.
- Practitioners were fully engaged, not only in the creation of curriculum content, but also in the creation of principles and practices that underpin teaching and learning. These were kept under regular review and an expectation set that new staff would participate in this process. This was formalised through documentation so that staff have continuous access to the principles that were guiding practice.
- Creating an ethos that encouraged risk taking as part of the learning process was important. To achieve this there was a need to suspend reference to criteria that is driven by external requirements. The emphasis was placed on

processes that were established contextually with a focus on diagnostic and developmental feedback to staff in the initial stages. Criteria defining an inquiry approach was eventually integrated into lesson monitoring schedules.

- Opportunities for teachers to learn from one another through direct observation and discussion were provided. There was an expectation that all teachers participate and comment on this process so that an inclusive learning culture is established.
- Opportunities for external training were provided with the intention of reinforcing the values and principles that I was trying to promote. This allowed teachers to develop a collective sense of the professional self without feeling isolated and unsure of the direction that they were taking.
- The emotional dimensions of change were considered to allow teachers to feel (possibly negatively at times) part of the change process. This was initially uncomfortable as a leader. Discussions around the emotional dimensions of change were placed on the agenda during professional dialogue exchanges.
- Patient leadership was required. It was recognised that initial challenges may be alleviated when teachers were given time and support to change their mind-set and professional identity. Caution was taken about marginalising practice which did not initially match the intended outcome.
- Proactive action was taken to effect change by knowing and understanding the staff and, where needed, finding the key to support the development of specific individuals.
- Voice activities were initiated so that I was able to gain regular feedback to inform future leadership actions.

(3) Leadership Response to Improving Children's Approach to Learning

The following is a summary of findings linked to Leadership action intended to improve children's approach to learning.

- Challenges were set for the children such as inquiry based activities. Opportunities were provided to engage staff in professional dialogue about children's response to these activities. Professional dialogue offered a forum where staff could learn from one another.
- Teachers were encouraged to experiment with different organisational ideas and suggested ideas introduced through training or professional feedback sessions. At the instructional level, suggestions in relation to practice were offered that teachers may like to trail.
- Strategies that help to develop the children's language skills were initiated (or any other challenges as identified by the teachers). Once practice had been established, this was recorded as policy.

- Teacher and learner attention was focused on the process so that this had a least as much value as the product. Strategies that serve to develop the process were explored in practice.
- Reflective learning logs were introduced for a period of time so that the children became proficient in thinking about the learning process; this was reflected in the learning environment.
- Teachers were encouraged to focus the children's attention towards the kind of things that they might need to do to help themselves. A school wide approach to this was initiated which focused on intervention involving support staff.

(4) Leadership Response to Affordances

The following is a summary of findings that directed leadership action aimed at improving the kinds of opportunities and experiences afforded to the children.

- ICT and reading provision were reviewed so that learners have access to good quality material to facilitate their research.
- A protocol and practice for safe use of ICT that was explicit and encouraged the direct teaching of information processing and evaluative skills, was initiated.
- Access to resources that encouraged creative thinking and serve as 'blank canvasses' for the children either through play or inquiry based activities was provided.
- School wide activities that fostered local and global links were initiated.
- Additional efforts were made to engage parents in the learning process in ways that were meaningful to them so that they understood what kind of skills and attitudes the school was trying to promote. There was a need to be mindful that, for many parents, this was in stark contrast to their school experience. It is now recognised that it was advisable to initiate parent voice feedback in relation to inquiry.
- Opportunities were given for teachers to explore the kinds of technical and relational skills and attitudes needed to meet the demands of inquiry learning.

Chapter 7 – The Voice of the Leader

Introduction

I have frequently been asked by external visitors to the school what our recipe for success is; what ingredients need to be added so that we can 'bottle' the success of the children and my part in leading this. Apart from being able to identify a series of practices that I have picked up along the way linked to effective leadership, I have not truly understood the essence of leadership, that which brings the whole thing together (while acknowledging that I am still 'a work in progress'). Having conducted this research, I now feel that I can indeed suggest a recipe to 'bottle it' in the hope that it can be transferrable to other situations. However, like any good recipe the traditional ingredients may stay the same, but the way that it is packaged for the pallet of the consumer needs to evolve, move with the times and reflect changing contexts. This chapter is my attempt to draw together some of the lessons from leading change and the need to be responsive to the impact that this is having.

Leading curriculum change is foremost about creating the conditions that enable children. These conditions are significantly shaped by the value system that we bring to our work and, at the most fundamental level, the views that practitioners hold regarding the nature and capacity of the child. This chapter discusses leadership action and how this action needs to be instructional, in the sense that it is focused on teaching and learning, in order to create enabling conditions. It is argued that to evolve capacity for change, leadership must necessarily be responsive to the views of the children and adults subject to the change – a kind of barometer. In this respect, leadership can evolve strategies that foster the emotional, social and cognitive development of the child and adult. It is argued that it is this kind of 'leadership bridge', filtering the views of the adult and the child, that can create a responsive instructional leadership that acts in an informed capacity to direct the work of the school.

The voice of the children in this study strongly intimates that leadership action needs to focus attention on the development of classroom climates that promote trusting relationships to support the learning process. The emotional climate within the classroom is very powerful for the children and determines their willingness to adopt a risk taking approach to learning; a characteristic that is vital for inquiry learning. When they are emotionally engaged, children report that they do better and are more likely to accept challenge as part of the learning process. The kind of values that are transmitted to children does not stop at the classroom door. This chapter argues that leadership needs to secure an ethos within which children feel that they are co-collaborators in their educational journey rather than passengers. It is suggested that leadership should promote a

'done with' the child rather than a 'done to' approach to educating children. It is also vital that leadership is aware of the kinds of ways that we, possibly inadvertently, transmit values to the children and disseminate this awareness. A key role of leadership is to heighten staff awareness about the children's needs and secure practice that reflects the principles of social pedagogy; practices which are holistic where the teacher recognises the importance of their relationship with the child and possesses the professional skills and the 'professional heart' (Boddy, 2011) to reflect on this relationship and its contribution to the child's development.

Responsive Instructional Leadership

(1) Facilitating Adults Response to Children Through Voice and Reflective Practice

One of the teachers returned from lesson observation of a literacy lesson delivered by a demonstration practitioner deemed to be outstanding. Our hard working and extremely able Key Stage 1 teacher, has struggled with the whole idea of inquiry because, in her own words 'she likes to know where she is.' However, I have kept on my mission and kept her on board as I have high hopes for her as a teacher generally. Her next step is to deliver outstanding practice, hence the visits. When I asked her how she had got on she said that it (the lesson observed) was okay but very safe, nothing different and noted that she now felt more confident in her own practice. She also commented that other schools were so far behind and no one knew anything about inquiry. Thumbs up! I think her mind set may be changing. She is beginning to buy in to the whole idea of a need to change and feels safer moving away from a prescribed curriculum. This, of course, can be very challenging in the early years of teaching when we all crave the 'whole package approach' simply to keep our heads above water. If this is the case, teacher training needs to take on a new look if we are to deliver a 21st century curriculum.
(Journal – 15th November 2009)

Although too wide a field to be addressed in detail through this discussion, it is worth noting that, in view of this young teacher's feelings, there are certainly some implications for the way in which teachers are prepared for their role when students. Creative thinking and planning needs to be addressed at universities and school based practice should provide opportunities for students to learn how to apply their skills in a cross curricular way. If we really are to prepare young teachers to meet the demands of a twenty first century education, then this should be a prerequisite from the outset. Developing a mind-set which allows the practitioner to take calculated risks should be a feature of training and assessed and evaluated accordingly.

Over the past two decades, there has been relentless change within education. Change in itself is not necessarily a negative thing, particularly if it results in improved conditions or outcomes. It would, however, be naive to think that people find change easy to accommodate. My own journey through leading this initiative has led me to believe that a key component in managing the change

process is the level of involvement that is afforded to the people affected. As McIntyre et al (2005) reminds us, research aimed at implementing change for children must necessarily begin with adults and involve them in this process. My intentions at the outset of this project were, through the curriculum, to improve the learning experiences of the children and engage them in that process. In my endeavour to do this, I now feel assured that had I not began by addressing the needs of the staff in managing change, this initiative would have failed. I suspect that the consequences could have been potentially catastrophic for the school in the sense that we may have lost the benefits of some of the successful practice that we had already established. In shaking the confidence of the teachers, leadership essentially rocks the scaffold that frames the children's learning experiences. This is something that leaders need to be aware of when initiating any kind of change within a school, contextual or imposed from outside.

In my first headship role, I was greeted with a desk piled high with paper work. I pondered, should I….? The curriculum was in a mess and standards were on the floor. I promptly grabbed a bin bag and shoved the whole lot in. A couple of days later many of the staff approached me looking for their pay slips… oops! Okay, some administrative tasks do matter and I have since learned to be more discerning. Nothing else from that onerous pile returned to haunt me. Quite simply, the core business of schools is learning and teaching. Administration needs to support this. Organisation for leadership and management is crucial as this will ultimately determine the framework defining the scope or limits of teachers' professional autonomy (Helsby, 1999). There are many aspects of a Head Teachers role that will distract from this if they are not linked back to the core purpose of the school. Many tasks associated with the role are necessary to secure efficient running of the organisation but the link between the quality of teaching and learning must necessarily be maintained; anything outside of this is a waste of professional time. I have a saying that I periodically remind the teachers of, "If it doesn't make any difference to the quality of learning for the children, don't bother doing it".

One of the key features of my leadership has always been to keep my 'head in the classroom'. My capacity to do this has varied over the years from teaching 50% of the time within the for the first five years of opening the school to virtually no time within the classroom, of my own school, when supporting the leadership of other schools in challenging circumstances. This has sometimes involved sole responsibility for teaching, or team teaching, to support the development of others. Maintaining a teaching commitment can sometimes be very difficult as a Head Teacher; there are simply so many other distractions. There is also a danger that effective Head Teachers are also in demand to support the development of others outside the context of their own schools.

Indeed, with the recent decrease in funding to schools, it is highly likely that many Head Teachers are increasingly directing their attention away from their own school in order to generate income to bolster their flagging budgets. I initially struggled with the idea of having less contact with children in a direct instructional capacity. My own leadership journey has taught me that as long as leadership actions are focused on developing the quality of the child's experience within the classroom, then it will be effective. Indeed, the distribution of this capacity is more important than being able to deliver it oneself. In terms of my own management of time, I now feel professionally comfortable in prioritising my personal understanding of the technical skills required to teach; my awareness of the quality of teaching and learning within classroom; the organisation and allocation of resources for teaching and the support of those responsible for teaching above anything else. In this sense, I locate myself in a position where I am able to support the work of others. Even when I am away from the school and working in another professional capacity, I try to remain focused on what I can learn from the experience to improve my leadership of learning and teaching within my own school.

The notion that leadership should be directly concerned with teaching and learning is embodied in an instructional leadership style or approach. It encompasses leadership behaviours that include modelling instruction, providing constructive feedback, obtaining views, reinforcing positive teaching through praise, supporting collaborative opportunities and providing quality professional development for staff (Blase & Blase, 1998, 2000). There is no precise definition of the term 'instructional leader' but it is generally understood to be concerned with the actions that a Head Teacher undertakes or delegates to others to promote pupils' learning. With a more recent trend in shifting the emphasis away from the instructional capability of teachers to a more precise focus on learning, for the purpose of my discussion, I accept the interpretation that instructional leadership is not just confined to classroom activities but addresses the core business of the whole school. This locates the leader as a 'learning leader'; someone who directs the activities of the school to enhance the quality of learning including teaching (DuFour, 2002).

One of the strengths of engaging in focused observations and lengthy discussions with the children is that it provided information to enhance the instructional capacity of the teachers. Coupled with the teachers' individual views, in relation to their own experience of practice, it was possible to act as a kind of mediator to allow the collective development of best practice in relation to inquiry. This 'bridge' between children's views and knowledge of their response within all classrooms was an important role to enable the development of future practice. There were some significant issues that emerged from this triangulation of

information. For example, the children indicated that there needed to be a balance between pace of thinking and pace of activity; this was also evident in practice where depth of discussion was sometimes hampered due to quick movement across activities. The children felt that if they were to be afforded choices, then they needed time to make these. A balance needed to be struck.

Teachers understandably wish to keep the pace of learning fast; this was evident in their practice and does secure progress in some respects. However being able to alert them as to the effects of an overly fast pace allowed them the opportunity to reflect on their current practice, and consider whether changes needed to be made. This, in turn, enhanced their instructional capacity in response to the children. Chapter six highlights many examples of practice that were amended in response to children's views. The relevance of this in relation to leadership is not necessarily the action undertaken but the role of the leader in initiating this action. In feeding back children's response in terms of their views and actions, it is possible for the leader to enhance the instructional capacity of teachers. This does not remove the teachers' ultimate control over their practice because once alerted, the teacher can engage in the process of measuring pupil response and adjust their practice accordingly – the cycle continues. It is the act of responding to children that is crucial. The role of the instructional leader, therefore, is one which can (through voice activities and observation) provide an overview of pupil response, set the expectation and opportunity that staff collectively engage in professional dialogue, and trial practice with a view to enhancing the quality of learning. In this respect, leadership can develop a culture around teaching and learning that is responsive to the child.

Teaching makes incredible demands of every individual within the organisation. In an attempt to handle the range of professional related activities, aspects of the role can become compartmentalised to a 'to do list' where completion of the task becomes more important than the process. The role of the instructional leader is one that helps to secure a culture around teaching and learning that does not elevate organisational routines above the needs of the child. There is a need for a culture that can challenge the notion that it is acceptable to deliver a lesson plan simply because it is just that, a planned lesson, irrespective of whether or not it is working for the child. A culture in which the teacher is given time to stand back and reflect on the child's response to their instruction and the learning environment that they are instrumental in creating.

In securing the development of quality learning, the instructional leader also needs to be prepared to adjust their expectations temporarily around the quality of immediate practice. In developing new initiatives some aspect of teacher's

instruction or children's learning may see a brief decline in standards as was evidenced by this research. If the ultimate goal is to improve the quality of learning, then deferred gratification needs to be an understood and accepted and children and teachers should not be penalised unnecessarily. Sometimes the benefits of an approach are not immediate but are more self -sustaining in the long run. The crucial factor in securing standards is to have rigorous feedback mechanism in place and systems which enable teachers to define precisely which aspect of the child's learning has improved and which aspects have temporarily dipped. This will enhance the instructional capacity of teachers and enable them to see the benefits of their efforts. As every experienced practitioner is aware, it rather depends on what is being measured. If assessment continues to measure one thing and instruction is promoting another then this is a sure way to make teachers feel deskilled. An example of this process was evident in this research; in allowing the children free choice in recording with inquiry, standards of freely recorded written work initially declined but the children's levels of creativity and motivation were enhanced. We readdressed the balance by developing assessment structures that could identify improvements in inquiry attitudes and skills and writing frames to support the writing process. In doing this, we broadened the remit of what we were looking at with regard to the child's development. An instructional leader therefore needs to be a key figure in evolving practice that demonstrates a collective commitment to the agreed nature of this practice and secures suitable resources to support it. Engaging in this research has confirmed to me that, through their actions, Instructional leadership needs to demonstrate a patient commitment to the route taken in attempting to secure improved outcomes.

One of the other aspects of leading learning is the management of mind sets that underpin instructional practices. It seems to me that many frustrations linked to teaching can be associated with rigid patterns of thinking. There is nothing more frustrating in the early stages of teaching than spending hours meticulously planning a lesson with differentiated activities and intended outcomes, only to be greeted by the children who complete the task in a second or may be unengaged or learn nothing in relation to the original intention. In my own teaching experience, I remember my well planned lesson concerned with the viscosity of liquids. Following a disastrous lesson with a pupil who, although extremely able, lacked every organisational skill imaginable, his working partner 'scientifically' concluded that "Darrel and salad cream don't mix". Witty and clever – he had a very valid point! Albeit frustrated, and with clothing covered in salad cream from the clean-up exercise, I went back to the planning board and reconsidered Darrel's learning needs. If pupils' learning does not follow anticipated or intended patterns, this may very well be frustrating, but dwelling on this as practitioners is a pointless exercise. As teachers we simply cannot

control every outcome. We can only guide and facilitate the individual in controlling some aspects of the outcome themselves.

The children clearly express a preference for practical subjects like art or design. As teachers, we are aware of the importance of the core curriculum (specifically English and Mathematics) both in terms of the children's future access to education and because it is these by which our practice is externally validated. However, less general interest from the children in these areas does not need to be problematic. If we enter into our teaching relationship with children expecting them to present more resistance and challenge in some areas of learning, then we can adjust our instructional capacity to accommodate this – we can plan in response to children's preferences, feelings or insecurities. In this respect, it becomes possible to use children's strengths and preferences to assist them in areas that they consider to be less favourable or more challenging. It also becomes possible to individualise learning. This allows teachers to work *with* children and it increases the likelihood of a more favourable outcomes – it is responsive teaching. All that is required in the first instance is a change of mind-set that allows the practitioner to see it as it is, and not how we think it 'ought to be'. Researching leadership of curriculum change leads me to assert that the role of the leader needs to be one that facilitates a collective mind-set in relation to teaching and learning; a mind- set that aims to view learning from the perspective and realities of the child and not an adult interpretation of this. The leader also needs to initiate strategies that capture and act on these views, so that instruction can be tailored accordingly.

(2) Facilitating Adult Response Through Professional Development Opportunities

An important finding emerging from my research is that a crucial aspect of leadership action, in relation to curriculum change, is being responsive to the training needs of the adults. Throughout this project, there were inevitably some aspects of professional development needs that could have been predicted from the outset, such as the staffs' need to acquire a basic understanding of inquiry learning. However, many aspects of the staffs' training needs were unexpected. For example, many teachers reported that they found inquiry teaching more challenging when the subject matter related to physical or religious education. I would never have anticipated this. I had assumed, from my previous lesson observations, that the children's questioning skills were relatively strong; the teachers had drawn the same conclusion. When we challenged the children through inquiry learning, it quickly emerged that the depth of their questioning was in fact quite weak and they merely exhibited a surface understanding of questioning. This had not emerged before because the

learning opportunities presented to the children had not challenged them sufficiently to highlight weaknesses. As a consequence, training focused on developing the instructional capacity of the adults to improve questions. Additionally, there were a number of training needs that were specific to the personal development of individuals. This required opportunities for collaboration and sharing of expertise.

In relation to continuous professional development, one of the strengths of this research was that is allowed the school to develop an approach over a fairly lengthy period of time. This process within the school is still evolving and is by no means finished. I anticipate that it will now evolve as an integral part of the evolution of the school. As previously discussed, there have been so many initiatives hurled at teachers over the past ten years. State education practitioners have been expected to accommodate changes to their practice at lightening pace; irrespective of their belief system or working context. With the arrival of the Conservative and Liberal alliance governing current policy, the initial rate of change and policy implementation would suggest that rapid change is a likely feature of state education for the foreseeable future. As a consequence of the need to accommodate rapid change, reflection on practice is difficult to secure within teachers' professional lives.

Agnes McMahan (2000) highlights the importance of reflection for intuitive thinking and for continuous professional development. McMahan (2000) suggests that training should not necessarily be short term and focused solely on the acquisition of practical skills and rationally based knowledge. She also recognises the importance of contextual training that does not just raise awareness of initiatives of strategies, but allows opportunities for reflection on impact, thus understanding evolves over time. Engaging in practitioner research has been of immense value in promoting a kind of 'collective think time'. It has helped to promote reflective professional dialogue. As participants have become more familiar with the social and emotional context of this, it appears that they have become increasingly more relaxed about expressing their views. Practitioner research has also allowed in-depth reflection relating to training and the development of practice. It has allowed us to consider the impact of training and subsequent practice over lengthy periods of time, which has helped to promote continuity and consistency in experience for the children.

The important lesson for leadership was not only the need to use information from adult and children's responses but the need to be flexible in relation to this demand. It is not a case of setting out a training programme at the beginning of each academic year and sticking to it. There can be a projection, but the plan may need 'redesigning in mid- flight' as the school year progresses and more

information about individuals' response to learning and teaching begins to emerge. It is more effective if there is enough flexibility in how training and development is organised, so that professional development is afforded at the point it is needed. In this sense, the children's learning needs can be quickly addressed because the instructional capacity of the adults who work with them can be quickly addressed. It also allows response to formative evaluation exercises. Strategic planning for training in relation to allocation of resources and how it is integrated into the school's cycle needs to have inbuilt flexibility. This can be facilitated by computerised planning systems (as is the case in our school) that allow access to all significant parties such as those that can be provided by a learning platform or online resources. This allows strategic plans to be changed quickly and requires little administrative input. Financially planning to enable responsive training is also important.

Another useful strategy is to allocate a specified number of days to teams (that can be taken on a needs basis within the team and managed by the team) that they can use at their discretion, rather than timetabling fixed non-contact sessions each week (other than that which is allocate for planning, preparation and assessment of course). A strategy that I also found to be effective is to allocate time to support staff specifically for their continuous professional development. The responsibility for how this time is used is given to individuals to decide what they need to do (in response to feedback and support) to fill the gaps in their professional understanding. The instructional leader, therefore, needs to create management structures that are flexible and responsive to the teaching and learning needs of the individuals within the organisation. In this sense, professional development can be directly and, most importantly, swiftly focused on the learning needs of the organisation.

My own experience leads me to believe that professional development opportunities are paramount in determining the capacity of others to assume greater responsibility for leading any initiative. The approach to empowering others in relation to inquiry was to firstly develop teachers' capacity to lead within the classroom and then to cascade this to their areas of curriculum responsibility; the notion of applying skills and understanding of teaching and learning within their classroom to specific curriculum areas. In the same way that teachers lead and manage the learning of children, they were asked to apply this in the context of leading and managing learning for adults. Firstly, the approach was to collect information about the children's response to inquiry in specific curriculum areas, cascade this information and then plan for action (including training opportunities), in response to what the information inferred in respect of teaching and learning. To begin this process, a whole school focus was initiated; this was over two years into the project. This allowed us to focus on

different aspect of leading inquiry as a school; all individual leaders were following a similar strategic pattern. It is intended, at a future date, that leaders will assume total responsibility for this process and initiate their own information gathering exercises and plan for action in response to this in a time frame that suits their leadership cycle. At the point at which I write, we have not yet reached this position for inquiry in the same way that we have for general curriculum leadership. I anticipate that it will take another academic year of development. If the teachers begin with a good knowledge of inquiry learning, I would envisage the process being much quicker, because they will have already developed their instructional capacities. For inquiry, this was not the case; this was entirely new to every teacher irrespective of their length of service. It was crucial to develop the capacity of teachers to lead this within their own class before asking them to apply their instructional capacities beyond the classroom. Leadership can only be distributed when there is capacity to do so. The first requirement of the instructional leader is, through training, development and effective emotional management to generate the conditions and capacity to distribute responsibility to others so that an initiative becomes sustainable. It is a case of shouldering and continuing to provide overall leadership and model until, such a time as it becomes safe to hand over total responsibility. If this is done in a gradual way by guiding and nurturing the process, it is likely to be more successful.

(3) Responding to the Emotional Work of Teachers

Chapter six and the discussion around staff's journey through the process of change highlights that which is at the core of every practitioner; their perceptions of themselves as a professional, the practical elements of their practice and their way of being with the children can be challenged. This is clearly evident in 'The Voice of the Teachers'. Coping with change inevitably leads to varying degrees of uncertainty about teaching, and can erode personal and professional confidence. As discussed, the modern teacher already works within an educational system that is subject to relentless changes driven by external factors. As Harris (2007a, p25) describes it "In the context of global shaking people experience persistent low level wounds to their sense of self, which leaves them feeling undermined and often deskilled." In exploring the effects of the instrumental and accountability driven approach on the psychological health of schools, Harris (2007a) also points out that some schools require leadership that prioritises the emotional wellbeing of the school. Organisations need to respond to transition (Hargreaves, 1994). From my own experience of working in schools in challenging circumstances and in relation this research, I would support this notion but would add that, at some point in the life of all schools, leadership must necessarily focus on the emotional wellbeing

the school. This is particularly pertinent when the degree of change required to implement a new initiative is high.

The manner in which the curriculum is led and the level of involvement that teachers have in shaping this was also a key feature emanating from this research. It was crucial to engage the teachers in the development of an inquiry curriculum. In the same way that leadership should evolve a 'done with' rather than 'done to' approach with children, this research supports the notion that this is also applicable to adults. Connelly & Clandinin (1999) maintain that teachers experience as curriculum makers is largely dependent on the context, combined with their personal knowledge, that they finds themselves in. Arguing that the curriculum and professional identify shape the individual in intricate ways, Connelly & Clandinin (1999) conflict may emerge within teachers if they are unable to match their personal beliefs with the practice that is expected of them. For some this may be to lose their identity because their view does not coincide with the prevailing pedagogic practices within the school; for others they are prepared to give up their existing teacher identity. While each individual is suggested to respond to institutional settings in a different way, the impact on the setting (and of course the individual) may be quite dramatic. This relates back to what I was discussing earlier; leadership must necessarily accommodate the needs of different adult personalities, their prevailing views and response to change. If teachers have a view point and a set of practices that are underpinned by a value system that they do not identify with (or possibly even understand) thrust upon them, this can be professionally and emotionally destabilising. As a consequence, commitment, the emotional confidence to trust ones decisions and, thus, effective practices may be lost.

My own professional experience of working in school in challenging circumstances has helped me to understand that the context in which some schools operate means that they must manage greater pupil and staff mobility. This can lead to recruitment difficulties, less consistent support from home and a range of challenging social factors that can hinder the learning process for children. My professional observations suggest that, what seems to be at the heart of this constant challenge is the amount of change that the organisation is subject to; they can be in a constant state of flux. It seems to me that where schools are successful in challenging circumstances, the leadership has managed to provide a place of safety for the staff and the children. The curriculum is fit for purpose and evolves, training helps to ensure that staff's technical skills can handle new initiatives, and intervention strategies support the emotional wellbeing of the community to secure readiness to learn. Essentially, shared and negotiated organisational structures are developed to help to accommodate change in whatever manner it may occur. Irrespective of the degree of

challenge, all schools need to accommodate change; it is how this is led and managed that will determine the ultimate effectiveness of the school. As evidenced by this research, in times of change that is beyond what the school is usually subject to, leadership action must necessarily address the emotional wellbeing of the school, in order to secure the conditions necessary to accommodate this change.

It can be argued that different kinds of organisations need to be strategically managed and led in different ways (Simpkins, 2005). Being afforded the opportunity to closely examine my own leadership as a consequence of this research has highlighted the importance of listening to the voice of staff. If there are mechanisms in place to hear the views of staff, and action is initiated accordingly, then this can guide the strategic direction of the school. Irrespective of how the context of the school evokes different needs; leadership can be responsive to staff and initiate action that meets their needs in any given context. My own leadership action was focused as much on responding to the emotional needs of the staff as it was on developing the technical skills required to implement change; the two could not be separated as one was dependent on the other in supporting the teachers' identity as practitioners. Hargreaves (2002, p5) illuminates the complex interplay between emotions and teaching by suggesting "As an emotional practice, teaching activates colours and expresses teachers' own feelings and actions as well as the feelings and actions of others with whom they interact. Teachers are engaged in an emotional practice when they enthuse their students or bore them, when they are approachable to parents or stand-offish with them, when they trust their colleagues or are suspicious of them. All teaching is therefore inextricably emotional either by design, or default."

Leadership action, in response to the needs of the staff has been thoroughly addressed in chapter six where it is argued that if we are to truly address the needs of the children, leadership must first attend to the practical and emotional needs of the adults who have the children's learning and development entrusted to them. Chapter five highlights the children's views about the relationship that they establish with the adults in school. In response to this, it is argued that leadership must necessarily draw practitioner attention towards the emotional needs of learners. The following discussion explores the leadership dimension of this in more detail.

Leading Social Pedagogy

(1) Social Pedagogy

Although fairly wide spread in Continental Europe, Social pedagogy is an approach to working with young people across a wide range of settings that is still relatively unknown within Britain. A social pedagogic approach, or the profession of the social pedagogue, may be practised in different ways and underpinned by varied theoretical conceptions but there are key principles that embody this approach to working with children. Cameron & Moss (2011) highlight the following pedagogic principles that are effective across a range of setting: the focus is on the whole person; the practitioner considers themselves to be in a relationship with the child; there is little hierarchy in that children are considered to inhabit the same life space as adults; reflection of practice is vital as is the application of theoretical knowledge of oneself; training prepares pedagogues to engage in many aspect of children's lives and activities; there is a need to understand and work with children's lives in groups; there is a recognition of children's rights and this is not solely limited to procedural legislative requirements; team work and the contribution that different professionals can make in 'bringing up' children is emphasised and communication and listening are considered central to developing positive relationships with children and young people.

What is clear when considering the principle of social pedagogy, is the strong emphasis on the holistic view of the child and the relationship that the adults are able to develop through understanding, listening and communication to nurture development. I could not help feeling a little disappointed in my own leadership when, in the early stages of my research, the children relayed incidents where they had felt misunderstood; or interpreted a situation as the need to hurry or they will get told off, or felt left out because their work was not on display. There were also comments that did not appear in the transcripts because the children asked for them not to be repeated. These feelings that the children recounted were not because of any deliberate act of unkindness of behalf of any of the adults, rather because of the demands of the day or the need to secure outcomes or the desire to progress with the lesson. Teachers were simply engrossed in delivering a vast curriculum in a timely and effective manner. My first leadership responsibility, therefore, was to develop adults' capacity to identify children's response to their teaching as previously discussed.

(2) Pupil feedback mechanisms

The second leadership responsibility, in relation to social pedagogy, emanating from my research, was to highlight the views of the children that the adults may not otherwise be aware of.

Eichsteller & Holthoff (2011) make the very pertinent point that humans are experts in their own lives. Arguing from a constructivist stance, it is suggested that social pedagogy can only understand the individual through 'their eyes', their social context and the interactions between the person and their social environment. In this sense the individual – the child, is depicted as an active and competent learner. The role of education, therefore, is identified as one which encourages learners to think for themselves rather than impose knowledge. This is essentially at the heart of inquiry learning, but unless it is presented to children in a 'particular way', opportunities for active participation will inevitably be lost. This was discussed in chapter six where I highlighted the propensity for some teachers, in their desire to 'deliver the curriculum', merely 'pay lip service' to inquiry processes by overly controlling outcomes. What presented the greatest leadership challenge for me was, not about providing training so that teachers could technically deliver inquiry lessons. Rather, it was about unpacking what was at the heart of teachers' practice – the values that were driving their practice and, ultimately, the beliefs that they hold about how children learn most effectively.

Perhaps the most challenging but most lasting leadership action emanating from my research was the need to develop deep reflection around practitioners' beliefs about the child. This required me to create opportunities for staff to explicitly revisit our collective views about how children learn. This is a leadership challenge in the sense, as my own experience has repeatedly informed me, that people tend to hold on to practices that allow them to feel personally safe. If a set of practices does produce high levels of attainment in the short term (and ones which schools are expected to deliver because external measurement of success identifies this as a priority) then why would someone necessarily wish to change them? Having led the school from the beginning, I had tended to presume that organisational ethos and values were inherent in all aspects the work of the school; indeed many of them were. Even discounting the moral responsibility for emotionally engaging children in the learning process, training teachers to attend to emotional competencies will have more beneficial outcomes for students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). As discussed earlier, what I had not recognised, however, was how the evolving success of the school (in term of high performance data in relation to national standards) was beginning to change the profile of teaching and learning – in some respects the

learning was beginning to be 'done to' rather than 'done with'; a kind of 'teacher knows best' whatever the child thinks. Following the first few years when the school first opened, we had relatively quickly secured high standards by engaging the children in the learning process – they were motivated to learn so they achieved high standards. The group interview data in this research was suggesting to me that there were aspect of their learning experiences where the children felt increasingly less involved; not listened to. I believe that this would have eventually led to a decline in overall attainment simply because the children would have 'switched off'. Where they felt involved, this resulted in high levels of motivation and outcomes. One of the difficulties of producing very high standards of attainment within a school is that it can take on a life of its own and potentially have a negative effect on the holistic aspects of teaching and learning. The need to sustain standards becomes an entity in itself rather than remembering the kind of practice that led to successful outcomes in the first instance. Additionally, as previously discussed, there are so many expectations and threats surrounding schools that can so easily encourage leaders and teachers to overly focus on data and outcomes, thus inadvertently forgetting their very reason for being in role – the development of young learners.

In September 2010, I focused our inset training specifically on looking at learning from the child's perspective and have since returned to this at every opportunity. My in depth interviews with the children reminded me that I needed to give them a genuine voice and initiate action that was a reflective response to their views. The following journal entry recounting the beginning of this refocusing illustrates some of the difficulties that I encountered in trying to accommodate the children's views and revisit and reinforce our school ethos around teaching and learning.

On one of the onset days I revisited inquiry and linked this to the motivation of the children. I looked at it from a physiological and psychological perspective. I am hoping that this will reinforce some of the work that we have undertaken over the past two years, but will, most importantly, remind people about the long term value of 'getting children on board'. However, just over a week later, I found myself talking to a parent about one very experienced staff member who is (correctly) trying to improve the children's approach to learning but is (incorrectly) 'bulldozing' her way through. One of the difficult things about changing the practice of some people is that they can get results or outcomes from rigor and in some cases from 'bulldozing' the children. I want them to fully believe that if you win the hearts and minds of children, you have their attention forever. I have noticed through my journey through leadership that people always revert to type under pressure. If there is, as there inevitably will be, pressure to attain high outcomes, people tend to want to use a 'safe' (for them) formula. The only true way to ensure that this doesn't happen is to change the 'yard stick' by which success is measured. The process has to become as equally important, if not more important, than the outcome. I will need to give it some thought as to how to keep people focussed on the process.

(Journal entry – September 16th 2010)

The need to provide overt feedback to staff about the children's views is now fully embedded into my leadership practice. Each class host a termly voice session where the children generate the questions, engage in lengthy discussions, and then the teacher records an overview of the children's views. This places it within the school's cycle of events, therefore is it not omitted. It also allows staff to hear the children's views first hand. This is then fed back to the staff and subsequently the whole school via an assembly. This also provides a public opportunity to air how we have responded to the children's views so that they feel secure in the knowledge that we are listening to them. I have also found it occasionally useful to challenge children's views and hand over the responsibility for solving some irritations or dilemmas to them. An example of this is when they feel perturbed about the lack of playground equipment for break times when there is a pile of damaged equipment in the shed dutifully collected by the Site Supervisor following his regular site checks. In addition to this, the way in which the school council is run now reflects more democratic principles. Rather than voting for class representatives, all of the children get an opportunity to meet with me across the year to discuss issues relevant to them. This allows the children a chance to personally give their view rather than the minority attempting to represent their interests (Peacock, 2011).

(3) A thought about leadership's responsibility for recruitment and subsequent development

I recently had a telephone conversation with a Head Teacher colleague who was engaged in the recruitment process within her own school. We began to discuss the importance of building a strong team and I assured her that my only talent was recognising it in others. We both laughed. I do now believe that there is most certainly something crucial about the kind of people that we recruit as leaders when we are building a team to deliver our vision of education. Effective leaders will, of course, work to develop skills in everyone, but I do believe that true excellence for learners comes from strength in shared values. The following journal extracts taken from March 2011, illustrates the leadership issues that I was grappling with throughout my research. Even well into the research process, I still found myself seeking solutions as to what was at the essence of really successful inquiry teaching and learning.

One of the things that has really struck me from doing this research is that you have to trust your own value system and not be seduced by veneer. I have always thought this and tried not to pick the safe option (when selecting people for jobs), I think that's one of the reasons that I work alongside such talented people. I think that this is not always a tangible aspect of leadership but a vital one; perhaps it's intuition, I really don't know. I have become increasingly concerned with looking beyond the qualification, immediate presentation of self and even direct answers and have become more concerned with the values and motivation of people. This has always been

'my way' in a personal setting, but it is sometimes harder to so this in a professional setting as others don't always get it – initially anyhow.

(Journal entry March 2011)

In recruitment situations, I now feel much more comfortable in letting the essence of the person over ride other attributes. I find myself digging really deeply to gain access into the value system of the candidates that we are interviewing, so that the panel can gain a clear insight into the views that they hold about the potential of 'the child'. From personally reflecting on this and from the analysis of data, as I shall go on to discuss in the next section, I am now utterly convinced that excellent teachers, of inquiry or otherwise, are such because they truly believe in the capacity of 'the child' and direct their attention to adjusting their practice to respond to the needs and voice of learners. This is a personal perspective – a belief system that is difficult to instil through training and development, unless there is a personal willingness and openness on the part of the individual. It is a kind of professional humility - a professional integrity that is driven by a passion for children to achieve what they wish to achieve.

Suggesting the need for continuing research into the complexity of teachers' role as agents of change and their moral purpose, Christopher Day (1999) highlights the importance of teachers as individuals with values systems that will determine their judgements as well as the skills and aptitudes that they bring to their professional role. Day (1999) also reminds us of the importance of leaders attending to adult learning as well as that of the children; not just in terms of teachers' ideas and practice but also the need to develop their care, commitment, enthusiasm and autonomy.

Considering the work of teachers through a focused lens, as I have as a practitioner researcher, has no doubt led me to conclude that teachers must necessarily be passionate about pedagogy and the need to reflect on and in practice. It is this attribute that I now seek when recruiting. Additionally, teachers must be of a mind-set where they have the courage and commitment to develop their ability to critically think and to utilize and develop their emotional intelligence (Day, 1999). Teachers do indeed need to be guided by passionate creeds and possess the emotional courage to question assumptions, consider an array of perspectives, challenge judgements and identify the complexities within their work - all in the interests of learners (Kubler LaBoskey, 1997). As I shall go on to address later in this chapter, Leadership must create the cultural and conditions which allow the development of these attributes.

(4) The Professional Heart – Children

The notion that young learners can exercise their power and agency by resisting teaching or by enhancing it is a very valid one – there does indeed need to be joint engagement between the child and their teacher. A child can choose to exercise their power to transform their future or not. As Hart et al (2008, p172), in describing effective teachers aptly comment, "They put this understanding at the heart of their teaching, making choices for their classroom practice on the basis of what they believe will enhance the choices that young people themselves make in the exercise of their agency". As discussed in chapter five, the children participating in this research felt very strongly that decisions should be negotiated between themselves and their teacher; they did not want full control but neither did they wish to be controlled. The children expressed a preference for adult guidance with a strong element of respectful choice. This delicate balance requires a particular approach where nurturing trusting relationships is vital; to act on someone's opinion, you first need to value and trust it. In this sense, leadership action must necessarily seek to model these relationships both with children and adults alike. This has implications for all aspects of the organisation. An ethos does not stand alone; it needs to be supported by structures and practices that reinforce it.

Leadership also needs to reinforce values through the kind of expectations that are set for teachers and learners. Trust needs to be a thread running through all dimension of school life. Staff must be trusted to do their work with integrity and guided but not 'whipped into shape' by threats; performance review systems need to reflect this. Children need to be trusted to make decisions about their learning and classroom organisation, and the curriculum need to be designed to offer choice with assessment systems evolved to fully engage children. Judgements about teaching should set an expectation that the emotional involvement of children is instrumental in securing positive outcomes. Judgements about learning should expect the child to assume responsibility commensurate with their age, and the success of systems and practices should be evaluated in these terms.

As discussed in chapter five, this research indicates that the social and emotional climate of the classroom was very important to the children. How the teacher responded to the children on a daily basis; teachers' use of language; the development of trusting relationship; the manner in which teachers set social expectations; children's sense of security and trust that they will avoid embarrassment; the teacher's regulation of the emotional climate within the classroom and the children's social and emotional expectations of each other were highlighted by the children in this study as crucial in determining their

educational experience. In her discussion of social pedagogy in relation to young people in public care, Janet Boddy (2011) offers a powerful analysis that is highly relevant to classroom relationships. It also locates children as active participants in society, as Boddy (2011) rightly cautions us against adult centred understandings of children's needs and views. In her discussion around the importance of attachment in care giving relationship, Boddy (2011), the uses the term 'professional heart' to explain the need for caregivers to offer practical engagement and empathy as well as utilising their professional knowledge. She describes this as, "The heart also needs the head – the balance brought by professional knowledge and reflection on a relationship." (Boddy, 2011, p114). From my in-depth discussion with children, I believe that this analysis embodies what the children want from their teachers – 'a professional heart'. *They want advice, they want direction, they want to be challenged but they also want to feel cared for within a safe social and emotional environment. Children want to have their views respected and feel that they have a say in the direction that their learning journey takes*. Inherent within the 'professional heart' is the idea that there is an emotional connection between the teacher and the child where the child's everyday values, views and aspirations are considered. The challenge of the social pedagogic teacher therefore is to develop a connection with the child that neither undermines nor substitutes their professionalism.

In the same respect, if schools are to meet the needs of learners it therefore follows that it is the role of leadership to evolve an organisation which allows social pedagogic relationships to flourish. Since embarking on this research, I have most certainly reflected on my practice as a leader. As discussed, I have initiated strategies that allow the children to voice their views and use every suitable opportunity with staff to reflect on children's emotional as well as cognitive response to our practices. This may range from planned focused observations linked to pupils' response to the odd comment, prompt, challenge or question during a training session. This is a way of drawing attention to the importance of the social and emotional concerns of children. Feedback in relation to children's views is something that has been cascaded to all support staff through leadership training organised by 'subject area' leaders within the school. The initial propensity for staff to feel threatened when on first hearing the children's uncensored views should not be underestimated by leadership. When feeding back the children's views to the meal supervisory staff, the leader hosting the training was initially greeted with a fairly strongly threatened and negative response. However, providing that such responses are handled sensitively and a sense of trust exists between the adults within the school, then our experience suggests that a degree of appropriate desensitising appears to occur. This allows people to hear important messages without personalising them. There also needs to be the understanding that the children will hold

specific views whether we choose to hear them or not. It is also important that leadership expects the children to justify their views, either positive or negative so that the children assume responsibility for their opinions. As pupil voice feedback has become a more common feature of our practice, there is recognition of the value that this has in supporting children in a caring and professional way.

The notion of 'professional heart' is also very useful when teaching and leading in challenging circumstances. The professional capacity to have room in your heart for someone even when they present the most difficult of challenges is a very powerful and empowering teaching tool. It is never professionally effective to take challenging behaviour exhibited by pupils personally so that resentment builds up, however difficult this may be. Across my teaching career, I have often spoken to staff about this very matter and urged them to look at the relationship that they build with the child prior to any adjustments to curriculum content. To develop the self-knowledge and the skills to balance the personal and professional within ones-self can be a highly effective means of securing the commitment of young learners no matter how challenging the behaviour that they initially present.

Reflection of my own professional experience and evidence from researching the realities of teachers' work suggests that teachers do demonstrate dedication well beyond their job descriptions; the majority care deeply for the children and possess reserves of patience, tolerance and skill (Acker, 1999). As discussed in chapter two, contemporary teachers find themselves working within a context of competing interests. In his analysis of teaching in 'The Knowledge Society' (Hargreaves, 2003, p2) describes this as "It craves higher standards of learning and teaching, yet it has also subjected teachers to public attacks; eroded their autonomy of judgement and conditions or work; created epidemics of standardization and overregulation and provoked tidal waves of resignation and early retirement, and shortages of eager and able educational leaders. In view of this, I would suggest that there has never been a time when it is more important for leaders to strongly represent the children entrusted to their care. Leadership must necessarily direct the work of their organisations to accommodate the needs of those that the organisation is supposed to represent– children and their families. With such competing interests, it would be easy and understandable for teachers to overly focus on outcomes if their attention is not also drawn to the process by which these are secured. From my research, I would suggest that imbedding an inquiry approach within pedagogy encourages the development of partnership and trusting relationships between children and those who teach them. For inquiry, there is the necessity to share control of the teaching and learning process. The role of the adult is facilitator

rather than director; this lends itself to different a kind of attachment. Outcomes in this sense are dependent on pupil response so a positive process is likely to be secured.

(5) The Professional Heart – Adults

As well as becoming more purposeful in my leadership action to draw adult attention to the children's views about the social and emotional dimension of their school lives, I have also begun to consider more deeply the way in which I nurture the adults within the school. I have always believed in the idea of 'treating others the way that you would like to be treated yourself'; perhaps a combination of a background in psychology and 'catholic guilt'. In this respect, I have always tended to adjust my leadership behaviour to accommodate the emotional motivation of the person I am interacting with. What I had not recognised, was the importance of securing emotional relationships to help to develop the whole person, not just the professional, within an educational context. Not in an exclusively personal sense as to secure truly contextually inclusive relationships, it is difficult for leaders to pursue personal relationships beyond the confines of the organisation. Rather, the 'person' within the professional relationship. I had perhaps attended to this aspect of my leadership in the past without any real recognition of what I was doing or the effect that this was having in securing my capacity to nurture others effectively. Through practitioner research, by affording repeated discussions with staff and reflection on practice, I have been able to recognise that adult needs within an organisation are not so dissimilar to that of the children. *Similarly, adults want advice, they want direction, they want to be challenged but they also want to feel cared for within a safe social and emotional environment. Adults also want to have their views respected and feel that they have a say in the direction that their learning journey takes.*

Stefan Kleipoedszus (2011) offers a very pertinent analysis of what he terms the 'inner team' that is relevant to my discussion. In asserting that professional pedagogues should be unconditionally respectful to the young people in their care, Kleipoedszus (2011) notes that challenge and carefully managed conflict is also important to help children to learn. My research would support this assertion. The in-depth discussions with the children indicated that they valued this kind of support from their teachers and other significant adults in their lives. They understood the need for fair constructive feedback and welcomed a shared responsibility for shaping their learning and educational experiences. Kleipoedszus (2011) perceives the role of the pedagogue as one in which the person utilizes the capacity of what the 'inner team' – the professional, the private, the personal. The former is understood to be the capacity of the person

to use theories to understand the behaviour of the child. The latter is someone in the work place who can share views, preferences and interests with the child, and the private is the person outside the work place. For Kleipoedszus (2011), it is the role of the pedagogue that successfully utilizes this 'inner team' to help to develop successful communication. This is not only relevant in a teaching context but also as a leader of teachers. It is, to a large extent, about emotional management of oneself in order to challenge and enable others (child or adult) in an emotionally and socially safe manner.

I have noted a greater understanding of my own leadership style since beginning this research. The interpersonal dimension of my role and the time that I afford in supporting the emotional development of others is also increasingly more important. Not in the sense that I necessarily delve any deeper into the personal lives of the people that I work with. Rather in the sense that I am more aware of judging emotional responses to contextual pressures, and the strategies and practices that are a result of my leadership decisions. I am increasingly more mindful of how the 'private' and 'personal' self contributes to the kinds of decisions that I make and the importance of my potential to influence others either positively or negatively. I am also more professionally mindful and recognise the importance of informal feedback in determining future leadership action. Perhaps it is as Harris (2007b) describes it; a recognition that leadership is a personal way of being rather than just a way of doing. I feel that there now needs to be less of a dichotomy between my personal and professional way of being which certainly renders the act of leading less stressful and more authentic.

Researching my own leadership action for the purpose of curriculum change has also helped to enlighten and refine my leadership approach more generally. As an Instructional Leader, it is important to keep abreast of current 'political think' around education and ensure that staff are aware of external expectations and the latest initiatives (in measured doses) aimed at driving up standards. Without this, there is always a danger that practice becomes too institutionalised and context specific and does not reflect changes occurring in wider society. However, in being mindful of the 'professional heart' for adults, it is also important to fuse this with the need to accommodate teacher's development of professional identity, professional autonomy and the impact that change may have on their emotional selves. Considering the rapid and accelerated change initiated by global economies and more centralised control over the work of teachers, Goodson (2003) identifies an erosion in teachers professional autonomy that may result in detachment and disillusion. He calls for reform that returns personal and professional discretion to teachers. The point that Goodson's (2003) makes is an important one for school leaders. It is possible to

develop collective and collaborative structures that deliver required standards. The crucial aspect is not so much the content of the curriculum, but the methods – the pedagogy. Experienced teachers have a wealth of professional expertise to bring to the table in this respect. It is the responsibility of leadership to secure opportunities for this to occur, so that practice can become a synergy of collective experience.

Additionally, If we are to persist with the model for teacher training that began to emerge in the latter part of 2012, where schools assume a lead in the training of future teachers through models such as 'teaching schools' and 'school direct', the role of experienced teachers will become even more crucial. If the role of teachers also begins to involve training others more formally, then it is vital that all practitioners are encouraged to fully reflect upon the theoretical underpinnings and methods guiding their practice – their pedagogy. Indeed, Goodson (2003), arguing for reforms that increase professional and personal discretion of teachers, also makes the very pertinent point that, removing experienced practitioners from the profession loses vital opportunities for mentoring. Leadership action that offers practical care and response to teachers is empathetic. It uses professional knowledge to make judgements and is, therefore, more likely to secure the joint engagement between staff. As discussed in chapter six, this research supports the notion that change can be particularly challenging for the professional identify of teachers; my own professional experience leads me to suggest that this is likely to be more predominant for practitioners who have evolved their professional identify over longer periods of time. A 'professional heart' in leadership is a route in helping experienced practitioners to accommodate change and utilise their huge capacity to exercise their agency and capacity to transform the lives of young people.

Becoming more mindful of the 'professional heart', in relation to adults, also contributes positively to the evolving culture of the school. As noted in chapter three, Deal and Peterson (2009) make the pertinent point that toxic cultures possess the same elements as positive school cultures. The only difference is that toxic cultures take on a negative valence of traditions, stories, rituals and values. As part of my practitioner research, it has been necessary to step back from the routines of leadership and become more mindful of the reaction of others by watching, sensing and interpreting. My journal accounts are peppered with my own personal reading of others' responses to changes that I initiated, responses to each other and new developments in practice. My leadership action was governed as much by this as it was overt voice activities and formal feedback mechanisms. Formal feedback mechanisms are important because they overtly communicate to others that they have a voice (providing action is taken of

course). Reflection on my own practice would suggest that my leadership action is equally influenced by informal feedback mechanisms.

As a consequence of my heightened awareness throughout this research, I have become more mindful of the importance of intuitive analytical processes in my leadership; this allows me to be more responsive to the needs of the people that I work alongside. Reflecting on the in-depth group interviews with the children, I learned as much about the school from what the children did not say, as much as the things they did say in response to my questions. I am increasingly more aware of the importance of informal feedback and therefore more likely to initiate routine leadership action in response to my 'observations' or negative responses from others. As I shall discuss later in this chapter, I have needed to enhance my own self-management skills to enable me to take a more detached view of others emotional responses. Taking the time to consider the emotional needs of others in a professional capacity, helps to establish a context where people feel valued, and it is more likely to reinforce their motivation for, and commitment to, the school (Donaldson, 2006)

From engaging in practitioner research, what has become clearer to me is the importance of relationships in leadership – whether this is between children and adults or adults themselves. Donaldson (2006) actually describes leadership in itself as a relationship residing among people, rather than a person or process. Presenting the analogy of three streams, Donaldson (2006) purports that trusting affirmative relationships, commitment to moral purpose and an overriding belief that collective action is greater than individual action enables leadership to mobilise groups to develop new practices, policies and new learning. Whilst preferring to acknowledge the usefulness of leadership processes in moving school forward because they can provide clear strategies to direct improvement – often quickly; I do strongly support Donaldson's (2006) three stream analogy that focuses on the importance of developing open, shared and distributed leadership patterns of relationships. This research would strongly support the idea that groups do need to identify a sense of purpose. Indeed, it was the teachers' desire to give the children the most motivating learning experiences that encouraged them to persevere with inquiry, even when it presented many challenges to their practice and personal identity.

The array of leadership response and action that was necessary to facilitate staffs' management of curriculum change has been thoroughly addressed in chapter six. Attention to the context in which change was occurring required an evolving mindfulness of leadership - a kind of responsiveness to others and their reaction to change. Perhaps the most important aspect of this is being authentic with others, being perceived as consistent and someone who acts in a way that

demonstrates that others matter; as Harris (2007b) describes it, a way of being. Developing a trusting professional context was crucial to facilitate change. The kind of leadership response to the reactions, views and fears of others helped to create this context. One of the most memorable lessons that practitioner research has taught me is the importance of 'personal safety'. If people are to take risks and have the courage to possibly make mistakes with the ultimate goal of improvement then they need to trust the situation that they are in. As Kaser and Halbert (2009, p20) aptly describe it "It is our central belief that regardless of innovative structures and new forms of schooling that are developed, the strongest forms of schooling will be characterised by trusting relationships and the development of outstanding learning by professionally connected and supported teachers."

Leadership of Self

(1) Thinking for Leadership

Discussing leadership innovations as a route to transforming schools, Kaser and Halbert (2009) propose six, of what they refer to as, leadership mind-sets necessary to enhance teaching and learning. These mind-sets include: a shift from sorting to focus on patterns of learning; intense moral purpose and trust; inquiry habits of mind; learning for deeper understanding; evidence seeking and distribution of leadership. Also addressing the notion of mind-sets, Day (2011) makes the important point about how leaders think (their mind-set) will determine their approach to 'systems thinking' thus how they organise students, manage behaviour, appraise staff and monitor performance. As Christopher Day (2011, p16) succinctly describes it "What leaders do, is, at least in part, a function of who they are (their identities), their belief and values – how they think and feel – and the interactions between these and the contexts in which they work". He further asserts that, while a focus on systems is an essential component of leadership, the needs for leadership to respond to changing realities and social contexts of teachers to secure their motivation, engagement and commitment is also crucial to secure the success of the organisation. This research would support the notion that my leadership mind-set determines subsequent leadership action.

Proposing an ABC model of emotions A, being the facts of a situation; B, the interpretation we give to the 'facts' and C, our emotional and behavioural reaction to the situation, Williams et al (2007) suggest that we often fail to recognise our human interpretation (B) of a situation, tending to focus on the situation (A) and our reaction (C). The authors use the term 'mindfulness' to refer to the development of a personal awareness of one's responses, physical and emotional to a given situation. I understand this term to represent a

growing self-awareness and consider it apt in discussing the management of my own emotions in relation to response to others and leadership action.

(2) Mindful Management of Emotions

As previously discussed, through practitioner research, I am increasingly aware of the need to 'allow' others to have an emotional reaction to change – either positive or negative. As part of my own evolving capacity to cope with the demands of leadership, I now tend to avoid personalising or responding negatively to the emotions of others. Coping with the demands of practitioner research has contributed to the understanding of my leadership more widely; it has made me more mindful, more aware of other's emotional reactions and more able to consider the appropriateness of my leadership response. As noted in earlier chapters, I felt a high degree of emotional challenge at the outset of this project; managing this has given me a better insight into my own emotions concerning leadership. This, of course, remains a journey where I anticipate being a passenger throughout the remainder of my career. As with all aspects of leadership, I still consider myself to be 'a work in progress'.

As I discussed in chapter four, the impetus for this research was premised on my vision for education; having delivered standards (as measured by public performance indicators), I wanted to explore avenues that I believed would secure even higher levels of pupil motivation and thus positively impact further on children's achievements. In doing this, I was not applying any prescribed formula I was 'putting my own neck on the line' – this may account for the feeling of vulnerability as described above. There was no external source to blame if it all went wrong! There were times when my personal confidence was challenged because contextual factors were dictating something else that I did not envisage. As I progressed through this research project, what began to quickly emerge (as discussed in other chapters), was that the fear and uncertainty of my fellow practitioners was even greater than my own. It was this recognition, the notion that every action is underpinned by a wealth of human emotion that helped me to become more in tune with the emotions that surrounded my own leadership.

Employing Goleman's (1995) conception of emotional intelligence, Elias et al (2003) define the core characteristic of emotional intelligence (EQ) as self-awareness, self-management and regulation, self-motivation and performance, empathy and social skills. Self-awareness – the capacity to recognise one's own emotions and likely outcome of feelings - was later defined by Ornstein and Nelson (2006), to be the bedrock of emotional intelligence. It is this aspect of emotional intelligence that I wish to address in relation to leadership of self. In describing emotional regulation or 'emotional labour', Crawford (2011) makes

the point that teachers and leaders very often have to display overt emotions that are contrary to what they actually feel inside – they emotionally regulate. Although, undoubtedly, people vary in the degree to which they are able to do this, my own leadership experience provided a good training ground for emotional regulation, as did the personal challenges presented by this project. Up to this point I was often quick to provide solutions to dilemmas that we encountered and had, in part, developed my leadership identity as a quick problem solver – someone who 'smooth's things over quickly'. As I was aware that the likely success of inquiry teaching would ultimately be about teachers evolving and owning pedagogy, I was determined not to provide quick fix solutions. I found this emotionally challenging. Similarly, when I observed practice that contravened what we were trying to achieve in terms of inquiry teaching and learning, I initially needed to regulate emotionally.

(3) Emotional Regulation and Authentic Professional Relationships

Of course, emotional regulation remains a feature of my work but less so than previously. Emotional regulation may be a necessary part of a leader's role, but it is inevitably repressive and stressful. What I have discovered in my journey through practitioner research is that focusing my attention to the 'professional heart', and allowing myself to engage my 'inner team' has inadvertently helped me to remove the need to regulate my own emotions to the same degree. It seems that when you allow yourself to engage in an authentic professional relationship with others, the need to regulate emotions is reduced. Reflection on my own practice as a leader would certainly support the notion that professional relationships with others are crucial to highly effective leadership (West-Burnham, 2009). In relation to practitioner research, when engaged in discussion with the staff, I found that the interviews often became more like professional dialogue where we could exchange professional thinking. Looking in depth at my own practice and leadership action has helped me to evolve as a leader that is increasingly emotionally aware, not only of the positive or negative impact that I can have on others, but also the negative impact that meeting leadership demand can have on oneself. Because I now have a clearer understanding of the emotional dynamics of the school, I am now more prepared to accept challenge, resistance or uncertainty from others as part of the inevitable human response to feelings evoked as a consequence of change. My mind-set is one which views my leadership role as one which must necessarily direct my attention and leadership action to supporting others in times of uncertainty or while their professional identity is changing. This, more measured response, not only helps me to keep a clearer head in making leadership decisions (because my own negative emotions tend not to get in the way of the decision making process), it has had a very positive impact in keeping my own

stress levels in check! Generally this mind-set imbues me with a sense of professional calm; as I reflected in my journal in March 2011.

I am feeling like a very calm headless chicken at the moment. I have a lot to do and a number of organisational challenges but it's okay. Dealing with a staff member who is losing her husband to cancer, kind of puts it all in perspective really. We move onwards and upwards.

(4) Mindful Time Management

I would assert that emotional leadership of self is the key to successful leadership more generally. Time management and ability to prioritise how leadership time is spent is also important; this requires emotional discipline and a degree of self-regulation. Throughout this research, it became apparent that I needed to be flexible and prepared to change my approach or leadership actions to accommodate the needs of others. The most precious commodity of all – time - needs to be afforded if leadership is to be truly responsive to others. For example, in-depth discussions with the children allowed them to convey many messages that I had not heard before, simply because the amount of time needed to delve deeply into their views had not been afforded before. I am now aware that, if I really wish to know what children think then, I need to allow time to probe deeply into their views; changing the way in which I meet with children and the regular class voice activities have helped with this. I also recognise that, sometimes, it is important to talk to children for lengthy period of time away from a teaching situation so that they feel more able to direct the content of the discussion.

Similarly for some matters or decisions in-depth professional discussion is required; this has become now become a more prominent feature of my strategic planning and training schedules. I am also acutely aware that time for informal professional or personal dialogue with staff is often equally beneficial in providing a 'safety net' and contributes significantly to developing an enabling professional context in the same manner as formal structures such as monitoring, performance review and training programmes. Leadership must be mindful of time afforded for leadership responsibilities and formal and informal leadership action often requires equal proportions of time. In this respect, trusting and open relationship can evolve both with staff and children alike. There are so many demands for a leader's time, it is important that leadership action considers what is the best use of this time rather than being swept along by the lengthy succession of tasks that continually present themselves.

(5) A Final Destination Mind-set

It is virtually impossible to predict the response of others when embarking on any kind of change or leading an organisation through the process of change. In view of the potential fragility of organisational structures, practice and professional identity that can be shaken by change, one of the most pertinent lessons, when embarking on curriculum change, is to have a clear idea of what one hopes to achieve at the end of it. There needs to be a clear and identifiable purpose that practitioners can collectively work towards. In leadership we may not always know the route that we will take on our journey through change but it is imperative that we are sure of our destination. For me, the challenge of motivating children to fully engage in the learning process, so that they can better direct their future learning was a very clear objective. It very quickly became apparent that giving children choice and affording them autonomy was extremely motivating – the children were enjoying what they were doing. Although we still had a lot to learn as practitioners, we had a clear measure of success from the outset – the children's attention. This encouraged staff to persevere with inquiry teaching even when it presented many challenges for them; they could see the ultimate objective was being achieved (to varying degrees) however difficult it initially was and whatever factors needed further consideration.

(6) Having the Courage Remain Responsive

One thing that I hope will remain with me throughout the rest of my career in education is to have the courage of my professional conviction. Since embarking on practitioner research, my courage to stick to my vision for developing young minds has been strengthened. If I have a belief in a particular pedagogy, then I hope to have the courage to retain my principles and implement strategies that I believe work for children. Not just in terms of high level of achievement and attainment but also in term of children's emotional wellbeing, ownership of the learning process and sense of self. In order to retain an awareness of what does work for children - strategies that do enhance their development in all respects, reflective practice needs to remain an integral aspect of leadership action. Reflection on my own practice has led me to conclude that effective leadership is about having the mindfulness, the astute awareness, to choose practices and procedures that meet the needs of learners and those with responsibility for their development. In this respect, leadership needs to be responsive to changing contexts, whether these are internal to the organisation or driven by external forces. Leaders, therefore, must necessarily develop their capacity to be responsive to need - cognitively, emotionally and socially – I continue this journey myself.

Chapter 8 – Discussion

Introduction

This chapter draws together the key finding of this research. Beginning with a brief look at mandated standards, the positive contribution that inquiry learning has made to pupil achievement and attainment is outlined. The overarching pupil voice messages for leadership are summarised in the following discussion. I highlight areas where leadership attention and subsequent action needs to be directed to increase our knowledge of how leaders might manage curriculum change and promote children's engagement, wellbeing and aspects of their capacity to learn.

Throughout this chapter, I argue that in order to impact on the instructional capability of teachers and therefore pupil outcomes, a leader has to establish and continuously maintain the conditions which identify the child as an active, emotional, social and cognitively competent learner; conditions which give an equal voice to the child and the adult. It is argued that there is a need for an organisational ethos which responds to the needs of adults in order to build capacity for them to respond to the need of the children; this is referred to as responsive instructional leadership and explores the instructional functions of a leader whilst being firmly grounded in the principles of social pedagogy. Finally, the areas that an instructional leader might attend to in order to focus the direction of positive influence are outlined. The facilitating significance of tools and artefacts as a defining element of instructional leadership practice is also explored.

Revisiting the Research Question

Employing qualitative research methods of inquiry, this research has been to investigate what I needed to do as a Head Teacher to facilitate change to develop a curriculum that provides opportunities for child initiated inquiry. Although initially limited in my own professional knowledge of inquiry at the outset of this project, I began with the supposition that inquiry learning was a potentially engaging and motivating path to providing children an autonomous route to direct their own learning and thus secure high standards.

Through practitioner action research, I have gained a high degree of insight into my own practice as a leader; I now understand my practice to be rooted in the philosophical underpinning of instructional leadership which directs the activities of the organisation to retain a clear focus on teaching and learning. As part of this research journey, I have gone beyond the functions of an instructional leader

to evolve responsive ways of working in order to maximise leadership influence to effect change. The following discussion is my attempt to articulate what can be learnt more generally from this experience in order to transfer to similar contexts or to meet similar objectives. The discussion stance that I have adopted is not one which seeks to contrast or refute others' ideas, rather to seek what other theories can contribute alongside this research to reach a collective understanding of effective leadership practice.

Robinson (2006) recognises that research offers us insight into the processes involved in leadership and the kind of dispositions required to exercise influence, but also highlights a gap in our existing knowledge of leadership. We know less about what a leader might turn their attention towards in order to direct influence. This research is able to contribute to our knowledge in this respect. For the purpose of clarity, I have discussed the main implications of this research in sections, and integrated the theoretical implications and links with existing theories and understanding throughout my discussion. In researching the work of others, I have been able to identify gaps in existing knowledge. We know that instructional leadership can have a positive effect on outcomes for children, but know little about what direction a leader might focus their attention and leadership activity to manage change and improve standards (Robinson, 2006). Through highlighting responsive systems for leadership action, this research is able to contribute to our knowledge in this area. To add clarity to the discussion, the key knowledge for leadership practice have been emphasised in italics.

A Comment about Mandated Standards

I seem to have managed to get to the final chapter of my work without reference to one numerical table, one co-efficient score or an in-depth analysis of statistical data. For a leader who runs a school with tracking systems that uses numbers to measure many aspect of children's progress, this is quite remarkable. Part of my leadership strategy has always been to ensure that everyone working within the school recognises the importance of monitoring children's performance, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The school has developed highly efficient tracking systems that equate the performance of the children against nationally mandated standards – this is considered to be our duty and responsibility to the children and their parents. There is a recognised need to reflect the system and context which the duly elected government has choose for them, irrespective of personal views; leadership or otherwise. Across every term the children's attendance, personal, social and health development, their wellbeing, their progress in core areas and their self and teacher evaluations across all areas of learning, including inquiry, is monitored. This information is used formatively to plan work with the children to take their learning forward, but they are a by-

product of the processes that are used to engage children in the learning process. If the numbers do not look as good as teachers would like them to be, teachers alter the process.

I have no aversion whatsoever in employing research methods more traditionally associated with a positivist methodology if I feel that it will illuminate our understanding of a particular issue. I do not feel that any method that might have enabled me to present findings in numerical form would have strengthened this research in any way. In fact, I believe it would have hindered the process of reaching the depth of analysis that the selected method afforded. However, as mandated standards are often numerically presented for public consumption as a measure of educational success, I feel obliged to briefly comment on the impact, in terms of nationally recognised measurable standards that curriculum change has had within our organisation. Additionally, creative learning is often seen in opposition to more traditional instructional methods in terms of securing standards. In my professional experience, this is a misconceived notion.

As the information was not collected as part of the data set in this research, measuring improvements in standards is informed by data collected as an integral aspect of the school's professional evaluation practices. Evidence of standards is informed by lesson observation, teacher monitoring, leadership monitoring, scrutiny of children's work, pupils' evaluations and, ultimately, performance data. These indicate that the development of inquiry learning has improved standards in the following ways.

The school has been developing an approach to inquiry since 2009; the children at Key Stage 2 have experienced an inquiry curriculum for three years. The children begin school with a broadly average baseline (7-9 below and 7-9 above average consistently over the past ten years) on entry to reception class. As this is the data that is regarded as a national priority, the following is a brief snapshot of standards as measured by national indicators in July 2013. As is evident from the data, the children are attaining extremely high standards. If achievement follows a similar pattern to the previous three years, those pupils in years three and four will show significant improvements as they progress into years five and six. The longer the children are at the school, the higher their levels of attainment. The trend is a rising pattern as they progress through the school. This suggests that the school, providing that current practice is adhered to, is well placed to achieve even higher levels of attainment over the next three years.

READING OUTCOMES FOR NATIONAL CURRICULUM TESTS				
Year	Below Expectation	At Expected Level	Above Expected Level	Significantly Above
3	7%	9%	39%	45%
4	7%	9%	7%	77%
5	0%	6%	26%	68%
6	3% *	3%	20%	74%
WRITING OUTCOMES FOR NATIONAL CURRICULUM TESTS				
Year	Below Expectation	At Expected Level	Above Expected Level	Significantly Above
3	10%	10%	70%	10%
4	6%	29%	10%	45%
5	3%*	16%	55%	26%
6	3%*	17%	30%	50%
MATHEMATICS OUTCOMES FOR NATIONAL CURRICULUM TESTS				
Year	Below Expectation	At Expected Level	Above Expected Level	Significantly Above
3	3%	20%	70%	7%
4	3%	45%	3%	48%
5	3%*	19%	32%	45%
6	3%*	10%	27%	60%

* Pupil will transfer to specialist provision. 21 of pupils have special needs and 5 pupils across key stage two have a full statement of special needs.

It is not possible to use the outcomes of this research to attribute the high standards of attainment solely to the development of inquiry; there is not a direct linear path in quantifiable terms. This research did not set out to use quantitative data as a measure of how effective curriculum change was in securing high standards of attainment. It is acknowledged that there are so many other variables in addition to inquiry that may have contributed to school improvement and rising standards; leadership will have influenced these in the same way that leadership has influenced the direction of inquiry. The focus for the research was to gain an insight into leadership practice and the actions that affect positive change. This is assumed to have a positive influence on standards. As instructional leadership is focused on teaching and learning, it is important to recognise that within the context of curriculum change, high standards of attainment have been secured for all children. Even the one pupil, who did not achieve in line with national expectations on leaving the school due the severity of special needs, did manage to secure two levels progress in core areas, a strong wellbeing and a positive and engaged approach to learning.

Professional observations of teaching and learning also demonstrate other areas of improvement. It is recognised that children are individual learners and their achievement and attainment is therefore individual. In view of this, the following is an overview of some notable areas of improved outcomes intended to provide a descriptive profile of standards. Pupil progress in reading has annually been outstanding over the past three years for every cohort of pupils. With the exception of the development of inquiry, there have been no other changes to our practice for teaching reading over this time. The children's spoken vocabulary has also markedly improved over the past three years.

Children are generally more confident when presenting their ideas to an audience and can speak with greater ease and spontaneity about issue of interest and their learning. The children are also more proficient in describing and explaining their learning; this is evident in their verbal and written reflections. Evidence of improved speaking and listening is demonstrated in the children's attainment in writing and their performance skills are strong.

The number of children identified as highly able within the school has increased across all areas, with the exception of geography, over the past three years. This may be because teachers assess children differently or because the children have more opportunity to excel in different areas because our pedagogy has supported them and removed the potential ceiling on achievement and attainment. Irrespective of why, numerical data suggests that standards have improved. There has been very little change in the leadership of these areas. This is particularly notable in areas such as Science (10% improvement), ICT (5% improvement), History (7% improvement), Religious Education (9% improvement), Art (5% improvement) and music (12% improvement).

The children's capacity to free record their learning has improved. Work scrutiny and lesson observation indicates that the children are more proficient in choosing suitable ways to present their ideas and are less reliant on teacher direction or the use of templates for recording. There has been a marked improvement in the use of ICT for recording purposes, and many the children's use of software packages to present their findings is strong. There is also greater strength when handling data for science and mathematics.

Most importantly of all, the children's capacity to question at depth has greatly improved. This provides the impetus for further thinking and learning thus perpetuating self-direction in learning.

These are just an overview of some of the generalised improvements. The cognitive domain is also supported by marked improvements in teaching processes and the social and emotional development of the children. As Lee et al (2004) argue inquiry is defined as much by the pupil commitment as it brings in outcomes, this is evident in our school experience of inquiry. The major point here is that inquiry learning has altered pedagogic practices which have in turn yielded very positive outcomes as measured by national indicators. This delivers what is expected for the children and secures the right to practice in the best interest of the children. *That is why it is important for leadership not to focus attention on a creative curriculum or high academic standards alone; children need both and one supports the other. This is a crucial point.*

Tackling the Standards Agenda- Implications for Policy and Practice

Reflecting on general practice, I have often spoken with the professionals with whom I share my working day and reminded them that, while we continue to deliver publically recognised standards, we will continue to be 'allowed' to practise our craft in the manner in which we believe is most fitting for children. Because we have been able to show a rising, or stable, and sustainable attainment profile, not one person has directed us to implement any strategy of any kind. We have been able to pick from what is 'out there' (or develop our own as is often the case), the practice, tools and artefacts, to support our school development. Through this research, our curriculum and pedagogy has been developed from within the school by people who know and understand the children. As is evident in the data emerging from staff interviews, this is professionally rewarding and empowering. This research adds credence to the notion that teachers should have a greater lead in policy (Lingard, 2013) and greater scope for organising content. Within a school, it is teachers who generally understand and know the children the best, so are better equipped to respond to their needs.

Throughout my wider leadership experience, on countless occasions, I have seen schools directed to implement particular strategies for teaching and learning (that I believe to be a 'quick fix' and unsustainable) because their performance data is deemed unacceptable. It can be difficult to determine which came first, the low standards or the poor quality teaching as a result of 'quick fix' strategies which concurs that weak instruction leads to low standards. Either way, it does not solve the problems for the children. If children are bored and unengaged they will not learn. If children enter school with many social, emotional and cognitive challenges and these are not creatively addressed so that learning appeals to the children, standards will not improve. Of course low standards need addressing, the issue is how. As previously mentioned, creative strategies can sometimes take longer to translate into higher levels of attainment. The annual cycle of data production as a measure of a school's capability renders it more likely that leaders can be afraid to take risks and notion that 'more is sometimes less' gets discarded. In crisis situations where attainment is low, crises strategies are often implemented; these very often do not attend to the creative need for children to learn and will ultimately only result in mediocrity.

This research demonstrates that deep meaningful change takes time; those involved in the change need to shape the process. It is as Burton et al (2001) suggest that leaders need to work from their vision for education outwards and shape the curriculum accordingly. There will inevitably be pit falls along the way which require further consideration and action. As I hope to trace through the

rest of my discussion, children engage with a pedagogy which values their interests and attends to their emotional and social selves. Because of this, they are able to deliver measurable standards. If we are to judge schools by the levels of pupil engagement in lessons, as is currently a key indicator of our inspection regime, the implication for policy is that we also need to attend to a school's capacity to evolve their curriculum and practice to this level and give schools time to do this. The process which schools are undertaking to develop meaningful, shared and sustainable practice, which will ultimately secure high standards, needs to be reflected somehow in the public judgments that we make about the work of schools. If existing outcomes, in terms of standards, are not where they need to be, building sustainable capacity needs to be placed more highly on the agenda and acknowledged. Unless, through formal procedures, we give school licence to build sustainable structures, schools will continue the cycle of 'quick fix' solution to raise standards. This does not provide a sustainable solution for children.

In view of the potentially hindering elements of an overly prescriptive curriculum, my research findings support the notion of a curriculum that is more flexible and creates greater scope for teachers to organise content to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils and, of course, allows space for the personal and social development of the child (Elliot, 2001). It does not seems necessary to me for a curriculum to create tension between the personal and professional practitioner and encourage a potential dichotomy between professional values and the desire to deliver high quality and engaging learning experiences for children. High expectations can be set for learners without prescribing the entire content of the curriculum. Attempting to raise standards for all pupils does not necessarily entail commitment to developing knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the same thing. There does need to be a balance between prescription of the curriculum and flexibility (Elliot, 2001).

Pupil Voice on Engagement, Wellbeing and Capacity to Learn

Research informs us that children respond well to opportunities to be given choice and the opportunity to direct some aspects of their learning (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003; Gray et al, 2011; Hart et al, 2004). This was clearly evident in my research through the voice of children participating in this research. The children's creative learning journey through inquiry began with choice. *The children reported that appropriate degrees of choice motivated them to learn and persevere with challenges.* This was also evident in observations of practice where high levels of attention and perseverance were exhibited in learning situations that afforded choice.

Gray et al (2011) note that children's general satisfaction with their educational experience is important in determining their sense of wellbeing. This research would suggest that an important component of this is the affordance of choice. The children participating in this research did not present choice as an unproblematic option merely to impose their own will. They were very perceptive and astute regarding the kind of positive effects that this had on their learning, but were also aware of some of the contentions that this presented for them. There was also a need for the teachers to identify the potential inhibition that choice can have on pupils' thinking, questioning and progress; particularly for younger learners. Clear parameters defining the contexts for choice are evidently important for instructional purposes but it is essential not to confine too many aspects of the learning process. The children identified the social dynamics of groups as potentially problematic and limitations of experience and knowledge inhibiting certain choices. Consequently, children recognised the instructional role that adults can have in facilitating positive choices; choice that further their academic learning but also enable them to feel socially and emotionally safe. The children suggested that learning be a joint venture between the adults and themselves, (Fielding, 2007) and apportioned the responsibility for decisions at a fifty per cent divide. It is the dimension of choice that brings teacher pupils relationships to the forefront of practice. What was evident in terms of affording choice was the adult relationship that determined the context in which choice was given and subsequently managed.

Commenting on ways in which schools can support the wellbeing of young people, Gray et el (2011) have coined the phrase 'thinking small'. This refers to a set of practices that might be initiated to secure pupils' sense of engagement – their connectedness. This can sometimes be a challenge in large organisations such as those often provided by a secondary school setting. The authors comment "There are a number of dimensions to the 'supportive school'. Such institutions seem to pay attention to young people's relationships with their teachers, with each other, to their general satisfaction with their educational experience and to their feelings about their membership of the school as a learning community in which they actively participate." (Gray et al, 2011) Fortunately, primary schools do not often have to grapple with pupils' sense of detachment in the same way as secondary schools. Smaller organisations, such as a primary school setting, can more readily provide pastoral support and a sense of being noticed. *This research would indicate that a sense of being noticed, being protected and guided is very important to children. I have referred to this as a 'safety strap'.*

The message from pupil voice pertaining to relationships is very powerful within this research. I would assert that, had teachers not attended to these messages,

the likelihood of affecting positive curriculum change would have been dramatically diminished. Pupil consultation does not necessarily lead to action (Pedder & McIntyre, 2006). Following my involvement in this research, I would suggest that if we are really to engage children in raising standards, then it is potentially catastrophic if we fail to respond to their voice; certainly if we wish to deliver standards, attend to their wellbeing and prepare them for the creative thinking that they will need to assume their position in the work place. In order to meet the demands of inquiry learning, it is necessary for children to be able to take risks with their learning, both socially and cognitively. They also need to be comfortable learning from error, identifying when they need help and have the courage to seek it. The demands imposed in meeting this evoked strong emotional responses from the children; they fear humiliation, embarrassment and social choices that incur the wrath of their peers. Professional experience leads me to believe that this is likely in all learning situations, but inquiry with its emphasis on self- determination and direction has the capacity to evoke stronger feelings of insecurity. *Inquiry ultimately denotes that responsibility rests with the learner, children need to be brave. Teachers need to create conditions to facilitate bravery and leadership needs to emphasise the importance of this.*

The children clearly identify the kind of respect that is shown to them, through the consistency of teacher actions, as important. How teachers speak to them, their use of voice for teaching and correction is identified as important in helping the children to feel secure in their learning environment. How rewards are given, and the consistency of these, matter to the children. The way in which teachers manage routine discipline, and how children are allowed to socially interact with one another, all contribute to the social context of the learning environment. The quality of interaction that teachers develop and their capacity to develop meaningful relationships with children has been shown to be important (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). *It is evident from this research that all teacher action pertaining to this determines relationships and ultimately provides a precursor to teachers' capacity to effectively instruct the children. When safe, the children feel able to engage and learn; they look to their teachers to provide this sense of safety and to mediate and manage the social situation and relationships within this social context.*

The dimension of home is considered important in choice and the need to secure links with the child's immediate environment and their wider experience beyond the confines of the classroom. Making connections to focus learning opportunities (Thorpe & Mayes, 2009) helps the children to feel that their 'their virtual bags of knowledge, experience and dispositions' (Thomson, 2008) are recognised and valued by the school. *The children feel appreciated when they have something to actively contribute to the learning situation.* This also creates

a forum where teachers can draw on relevant experiences of the children and build on their funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992).

Often casual, or formal, conversations with children when asking what they want someone or something to be, elicits a response of 'fun'. My professional experience and evidence from this research suggests that this does not necessarily equate with children charging around in the playground or engaged in hysterical laughter (although there is a place for this of course). The children do express a preference for practical activities but they also express interest and enjoyment for challenging activities, tasks that make them think and enjoyment when they have fulfilled a challenge that they initially did not believe themselves to be capable of. *The children report that they want to feel happy in school; part of this is the curriculum opportunities that they are afforded but an overriding element is the relationships that they establish and the sense of value that the school conveys to them either explicitly through direct action or the implicit structures that the curriculum, procedures and practice sends*.

My own son has the good fortune to attend a caring, well intended, primary school that is strong on delivering measurable standards but has yet to discover the need, and thus 'magic formula', for getting children engaged in the learning process. The inherent parental value systems are heavily relied upon to ensure that the children attend to their learning. This would not be possible in many contexts. My heart sinks to great depths when my son informs me that he loves his school and his teacher but has to accept that learning is boring. How many other children across the country feel the same?

Professional learning and experience suggests to me that ill-fitting learning experiences are, too often, imposed upon children and justified as a need to prepare them for the real world. It is important as leaders to remember that children learn something from every situation, positive or negative (Bragg and Manchester, 2011). I believe that there is a need for a change of mind set – schools need to collectively operate from a different stance. The notions that it is fitting to channel children to focus on things that they are, often, not remotely interested in when it is possible to secure the same skills, aptitudes and attitudes needed for life in more suitable, child friendly, ways needs to be addressed. There is a need for professional ownership of practice which questions how we work with children. In framing these questions to guide our practice, we need to refer to children's response – their voice.

Cullingford (1997) speaks of children's attention to social issues within and outside school. As supported by this research, and discussed in more detail in chapter five, children are very sensitive to social dynamics within school. More

sophisticated methods for analysing determinants for children's performance provide us with useful information about the differential outcomes of schooling for different groups. Removing the onus of potential barriers to learning away from the child, as she rightly asserts that these are not inherent within children, Hughes (2010) broadens the definition to include barriers that can be the result of schools themselves and their place in society. As well as those barriers commonly identified by Ofsted as vulnerable groups, she includes those which have emanated from pupil voice research which are: how the curriculum is organised, limitations in resourcing, an unsupportive learning ethos, distractions from other children and a lack of personal readiness to focus and learn. In my professional experience, I have noted that many children either enter school with an array of socially challenging issues that they must accommodate; or will experience an interruption in their positive wellbeing during the course of their primary school years. Issues such as bereavement, divorce, unemployment, mental health problems of parents or a sibling, absence of a parent due to service duty or imprisonment, violence, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or physical abuse, adoption, family breakdown, substance abuse within the family, disability of a parent or sibling and the necessity to be a carer; a pretty exhaustive list and not all of these children appear in Ofsted's vulnerable groups list. These are all issues that I have seen children endure during their primary years of school. Limitless possibilities to impair a child's sense of security and wellbeing, and the potential to interfere with their readiness to learn - in some cases even before they have picked a pencil up!

I am sure that this is the experience of every Head Teacher working in a primary school across the country and in some contexts, quite excessively. Wellbeing does encompass medical and psychiatric health but it also includes children's attitudes, dispositions, self -esteem and a child's frame of mind Gray et al (2011). In my professional experience, interruptions in positive wellbeing are not confined to any particular social class. They simply manifest themselves in different ways in different social contexts. *School experience can either support or impair wellbeing. In view of this, leadership action needs to address those factors which contribute to a child's sense of wellbeing.*

Knoll & Patt (2003, p29) remind us "The habits of mind of young people and their readiness to learn can be strongly shaped by increasing their social-emotional skill level." Irrespective of what the academic aspirations are for children, there is a moral responsibility to nurture their mental health and development in every respect, not just to pass tests and meet the requirements of a standards agenda. Even if, as practitioners, we abdicate from this responsibility, children simply will not 'deliver' if they are not, for whatever reason, able to learn and thus 'perform'. My professional experience informs me that intensive intervention

can be effective to secure children's readiness to learn. However, this alone is not enough. *The conditions in which everyone assumes responsibility for children's wellbeing must necessarily to be created; it needs to be part of the pedagogy of the school that is guided by leadership.*

The prevailing message from this research, taken from the voice of children, is that leadership must first attend to relationships and the conditions under which these develop. It is not permissible to assume that teaching and learning just happens within a context where relationships form accordingly in support of this. Children say that they have a need to feel safe, to feel happy; to be overtly and implicitly valued and for adults to provide a 'safety strap' to support them as they take these necessary risks; this impacts upon their wellbeing and capacity to engage with school. To independently learn, children need to take risks; to take a risk, the children express a need to trust. It is through their relationships that children receive messages about their self-worth, how they are valued and their capacity to learn and achieve. *The message emanating from the voice of children is that relationships require management; they require leadership.*

The Responsive Direction of Instructional leadership Attention and Action – Implications for Policy and Practice

The following is an overview of the leadership messages from children's voice. These are taken from an in depth analysis of the pupil voice data as discussed in detail in chapter five. According to the children, to respond to their views in order to promote their engagement, wellbeing and aspects of their capacity to learn, leadership attention and subsequent action needs to be directed to the following areas:

- *The Instructional capability of teachers to promote productive social interaction within the classroom.* Children say that they need help with the social dimension of choice. They have high expectations of one another's social behaviour and require assistance with the moderation of this.
- *Links with children's immediate learning environment and the wider context that they experience including provision for home learning*. Children say that they feel valued if their wider knowledge and dispositions are acknowledged.
- *The values that underpin opportunities that are afforded to the children and consideration to the kind of messages that this gives to children 'as learning'.* Children say that they need to know that curriculum opportunities afforded to them value their wider experience and are genuinely in their interest. This determines their willingness to engage and persevere.
- *How children's achievement is acknowledged through rewards and the kind of messages that are implicit within these.* Children say that they want

processes to be fair and consistent across all situations and persons responsible for their implementation.

- *How teachers respond to children on a daily basis and the integrity and consistency with which they act in social as well as formal learning situations.* Children say that irrespective of how a teacher tries to instruct them, if they are then inconsistent in how they treat pupils or in the management of social and learning situations; children's willingness and capacity to respond to instruction is reduced.
- *How voice and language is used for instruction, correction and in the management of situations.* Children say that they want teachers to be strict to manage inappropriate behaviour but speak kindly and with consideration when instructing them.
- *Procedures, actions and responses within each classroom and the school more generally which either contribute to, or negate, the development of trusting relationships.* Children say that they do not want to incur embarrassment or humiliation and are more inclined to take risks with their learning and share ideas if they feel safe from this.
- *The way in which teachers manage social expectations within the classroom.* Children say that they need teachers to set expectations that protect learners from offensive criticism of one another so that they feel safe to take risks with their learning.
- *Practitioners understanding of ways in which children can communicate their emotions, feeling and sense of wellbeing through non- verbal interaction.* Children say that they want their teachers to be able to recognise when they are unengaged, experiencing difficulty or upset, without actually having to say it.

As outlined above, the children participating in this research were very clear about what they need to facilitate learning; as well as the need for instructional clarity and direction, many of their needs are clearly rooted in social pedagogic principles. We know from other research that the findings from pupil voice identified in this research have been reflected elsewhere (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2001; Flutter and Rudduck, 2004; MacBeath et al, 2003). The implication of this for practice is that schools need to develop mechanisms, tools and artefacts which hear and act on the voice of children; not just to deliver predefined outcome objectives (Fielding and McGregor, 2005; Fielding, 2010) but to actually meet children's contextual cognitive, social and emotional learning needs. Evidence from this research suggests that this needs to be linked to practice within the classroom (Morgan, 2009). For leaders therefore, it is important to explore the technical dimension of the curriculum, teaching and the impact that this has on outcomes. However, it is equally important that

leadership actively works to engage staff in training and professional dialogue that helps to define and determine the kinds of pedagogical relationships that drive the curriculum. This research suggests that responding to the voice of children, and including the staff in this process, can help to create an engaging curriculum, purposeful learning environment and deliver high standards.

Responding to Adults in Order to Respond to Children – The Social Pedagogy of Leadership

(1) The What and How of Teaching

When visiting schools as part of my extended leadership role, in support of others, in challenging circumstances or schools in need of improvement, I feel saddened (both for the children and the professionals concerned) by the lack of curriculum ownership that is so often evident. Hard working, and well- intended, teachers are often either narrowing the children's curriculum opportunities due to the burden imposed by the perceived standards agenda or are waiting for the next curriculum directive from someone 'out there' to solve the prevailing concerns around underachievement. When things begin to go wrong in a primary school, it is evident that the sheer number and complexity of changes that teachers have been required to accommodate have become over burdensome (Goldenberg, 2004). When standards are the only agenda, learning can be fragmented and consist of disparate activities (Mortimore et al, 1998). Even some of the schools that I have visited deemed to be highly effective, in terms of delivering standards, have seemed a little soulless to me. School effectiveness has to be more than simply maximizing academic achievement and must necessarily embrace children's love of learning, their self -esteem, personal development, life skills independent thinking and (most importantly in my view) how to learn (Hextall & Mahoney, 1998).

My professional observations are not intended as a criticism of anyone, just an unfortunate reflection of where many primary schools have, unsurprisingly, ended up - afraid and confused. If, as Elliot (2001) suggests, teachers may justify the process merely on the basis of outcomes, there may be adverse consequences for wider aspect of children's learning. The problem with a stance where results are the prime indicator of success is that the children can so easily get lost; we can inadvertently forget those who we are trying to help. If we keep the children at the heart of the primary school and the curriculum then the aims of the curriculum become more clearly defined and meaningful to those that we are trying to develop. If pupils ownership was to become a central feature of the curriculum, then the curriculum aims might include: engendering a passion for learning, choice over learning, developing an understanding of human activity,

power relations and our future sustainability, how to collaborate and how to prepare for a 'good life' (Gallagher and Wyse, 2013).

As outlined in the opening chapter, heightened expectations placed upon teachers over the past twenty years for improved pupil performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009) and the tendency for schools to operate as private enterprises (Bottery, 2004) has led to leaders adhering to a performance agenda in order to meet public accountabilities (Day, 2003). As a result of this rhetoric of standards, it has been argued that there is a tendency for learning to be presented to children as knowledge, imparted sequentially in a manner that lacks depth (Lumby, 2001). Certainly my own professional experience over the past twenty years has seen a move towards a 'packaged approach' to the curriculum where children are often introduced to new learning irrespective of whether or not it is relevant, of any interest to them, or sometimes, even at an appropriate level; all because it is prescribed in a curriculum document that has been externally written and subsequently used in schools to guide practice. However, the emphasis on uniformity and a fairly standardized approach to knowledge consumption has not resulted in cohesive approaches across, or even within, all schools. Teachers implement the curriculum in a different ways; children's experience across schools or classes within each school is not necessarily the same.

The outcomes of this research would suggest that the manner in which teachers teach the curriculum, and the context for teaching, is as equally important as the content, tools and artefacts of the curriculum. The 'how' of the curriculum is as important as 'the 'what' of the curriculum. It is possible to determine the content of a curriculum – *what* children are to learn; this can be either nationally defined or evolved contextually as part of a school strategy. Either way, leadership attention is required to secure staff's content knowledge and instructional capability to support children's learning. As is evident from previous discussion, I tend to favour a stance that allows a curriculum to evolve contextually because it more readily attends to the immediate needs of the children and allows teachers the opportunity to avoid unnecessary repetition (Elliot, 2001). *What is perhaps less obvious in leading curriculum change is the amount of leadership attention that must necessarily be afforded to how the curriculum is presented to children.* It is the combination of teaching and pedagogy, the values assumptions and beliefs (Alexander, 2008) that determine the effectiveness of the curriculum in guiding children's learning experiences and academic outcomes. Evidence from this research suggests that the 'what' and 'how' of the curriculum are not mutually exclusive. To create conditions in which children can access and progress through the curriculum, *how* they are learning

is equally as important as *what* they are learning. This requires leadership attention and action.

(2) The Professional Heart - Attending to Emotions

By their own admission, the teachers participating in this research found it challenging and risky moving towards inquiry led practices. Many had become familiar and professionally comfortable with their existing practice. Emerging from the data is a strong sense of teachers' changing views regarding their professional identity. In order to allow teacher to develop new 'craft knowledge' (Cooper & McIntyre, 2002), it was important that leadership action created an organisational culture that allowed teachers to take risks with their practice and to learn from error (Troman & Woods, 2001). Similarly, in order to respond to the children's needs for learning, this became a necessary component of the classroom ethos. Teachers also needed to allow the children to learn from error. In this respect a school culture that provides a 'safety strap' for adults and children alike is important for instructional leadership. *This research would suggest that this needs to be an organisational ethos which begins with the adults and is cascaded to the children. An ethos where learning is derived from error as well as success; where adults and children alike are supported and not chastised should they make a mistake.* If the school is to be a learning organisation and everyone learns together (Lambert, 1998) then the implicit messages that children and adults receive from leadership are crucial. In the same way that there are messages 'as learning' (Bragg & Manchester, 2011) for children and the hidden curriculum delivers messages to children through organisation, physical conditions, systems management and differentiation (Hughes, 2010) the same can be argued for adults. Adults also need a 'safety strap' if they are to take risks with their existing practice, have their professional identify challenged and be asked to acquire a new skill set in order to meets the needs of learners.

If teachers are to be held accountable for the academic standards that children achieve, Elmore (2000) talks of the necessity for leaders to ensure that teachers have the capacity to secure these. A change in the technical requirements for effective teaching can evoke an emotional response in teachers. This research would strongly suggest that, in order to affect change in the best interests of the children, it is first important for leadership to attend to the emotional needs of staff and to fully engage them in the change process. *Evidence from this research leads me to conclude that in order to enable the development of teacher's capacity to instruct, their professionally linked emotional concerns must firstly be addressed alongside the technical dimensions of the role.* Change inevitably evokes a degree of loss, anxiety and struggle (Fullan, 2007). It is evident from the data that curriculum change evoked a number of emotional responses in the

staff. Many of these became increasingly positive through the project but it was evident in the early phases of change that negative emotional responses were experienced; some teachers felt deskilled. In recognition of the externally and internally generated expectations, teachers reported anxiety about a potential drop in standards. They also felt unsure what successful inquiry practice looked like, this challenged their identity as a teacher; existing methods for classroom organisation were also being challenged. In leadership terms, it is important to acknowledge that when change evokes an alteration of 'self-identity', this can result in stress (Troman & Woods, 2001). *In view of this, it is not only a moral obligation for leadership to attend to the emotional needs of teachers, it also secures the likelihood that capacity is generated for teachers to teach and meet the demands that a new curriculum may impose.*

Introducing something new to teachers is a great leveller in that almost everyone within the organisation has little or no experience of it. This can have beneficial effects because it can help to evolve a culture of learning where everyone trials practice. However, as evident in this research, it also challenges teachers' professional identity. Some professionals are more willing, and emotionally able, to accommodate this than others. Instructional leadership practices which create opportunities for staff to learn from one another can provide emotional as well as technical support. *Practice such as professional discussion around pedagogy, collective consideration of the principles which underpin policy and learning through direct observation of one another were all identified as mechanisms which helped to alleviate the isolation that can sometimes be associated with change.* Leadership action needs to ensure that such practices are embedded into school routines and supported by tools and artefacts.

(3) The Professional Heart - Addressing Values

As discussed earlier, views among staff groups are not necessarily cohesive with regard to practice and ways to develop children. Not just in terms of the actions that teachers undertake – the teaching - to facilitate learning, but also the values that underpin these actions – the pedagogy (Baumfield, 2013). This research supports the idea that leadership needs to be concerned with defining the purpose, values, ideas and assumptions that inform the act of teaching (Alexander, 2008). People are experts in their own lives (Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2011) therefore the views that people hold will determine their action. The idea that leadership attention must necessarily address the underpinning values that determine teacher action was clearly evident in this research. Teachers who hold the belief that children learn most effectively by listening will have a large component of teacher talk in their instructional style. Teachers who do not believe that children are capable of making decisions about their learning are adverse to providing opportunities for children to direct their own activities.

Even in respect of choice, it was necessary to encourage teachers to reflect deeply upon this and consider whether or not the choices afforded were real to the children or merely false piety. *This research supports the notion that the message systems of the curriculum (Lingard, 2013) need to be clearly thought out by leadership.* If they are not, the potential to secure consistency of practice which meets organisational objectives will be reduced, irrespective of the type of objective – creative or otherwise. Leadership needs to support teachers, promote trusting relationships and provide training that contributes to this (Kaser & Halbert, 2009). Telling or training teachers to instruct in a particular way is futile if the underpinning values are not addressed, for two distinct reasons. If teachers do not share the values which underpin an instructional approach they will be technically limited because they will not possess the mind set to engage with the process and advance their skills. Additionally, their motivation and emotional capacity to realise the organisational objectives will be limited. Teachers need to own the process of teaching and, of course, learning… theirs.

This research supports the view that teachers must necessarily own the process of curriculum change and the pedagogy underpinning this. Burton et al (2001) make the point that, currently, leaders are required to work their vision backwards from a prescribed curriculum framework. This research would uphold the notion that this does not support the development of a collective school pedagogical vision. Developing practice for inquiry evolved over a fairly lengthy period of time and required leadership action to create a culture of reflective, professional dialogue. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that externally imposing a curriculum has a limited capacity to affect positive change for all children. The difficulty with having a curriculum, and prescribed pedagogy externally imposed, is that it reduces the engagement of professionals in establishing effective pedagogy to meet the needs of learners in a given context. Teachers are central to school improvement (Harris, 2003) therefore they need a voice and opportunity to adapt and shape the curriculum (Hopkins, 2008). *Evidence of this research would suggest that leadership action which values teacher engagement and promoting reflection 'in' and 'on' action (Schon, 1983) has positive benefits for improving the instructional capability of teachers.* It is through this process that collective practice can be established; the process of discussion and reflection enabled teachers to address their own attitudes, values and some of the issues that change evokes.

(4) Bridging the Gap – An Imperative of Leadership

Despite the many wonders and rewards that can be associated with the role, teaching is emotionally, intellectually and physically demanding. My own professional learning informs me that excellent teachers are compassionate,

emotionally and cognitively intelligent people with a great deal of resilience. An abundance of focus and drive is required to nurture the development of, a typical number of, thirty children on a daily basis. It is this specific factor which leads me to one of the most crucial implications for leadership which emanates from this research.

Within my own organisation, as a staff group, we often reflect upon the need to revisit aspects of practice because things can, as we refer to it, 'drop off the shelf'. The teaching team understand this phrase to mean that as we introduce a new development focus or initiative, another teaching priority gets forgotten. There has been enormous pressure upon schools to deliver measurable standards over the past two decades (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2009). As only certain aspects of these are measured, teachers may feel inclined to direct their focus and drive to those areas which are publically identified as important in relation to the standards agenda (Elliot, 2001). *The very clear message for leadership which can be concluded from this research it that the social and emotional dimensions of teaching - those aspects which define a schools pedagogy, must not be allowed to 'drop off the shelf'.* This research would suggest that this is not what children want, it is not what they need and, ultimately, a disregard for the values and attitudes which underpin instruction is likely to eventually result in a decline in standards. If schools are to implement new ways of working in order to meet the demands of 21st century society and how we educate children to contribute positively to this; the findings of this research would suggest that leadership action needs to attend to children's emotional response to curriculum implementation, as well as their cognitive functioning.

As discussed earlier, in listening to the voice of children and adults regarding curriculum change, it was evident that concerns were raised by both parties about issues linked to the practical and technical dimensions of teaching and learning. What was evidently more crucial to the children however, was the social and emotional context in which this learning took place. This was not something that emerged as warranting as much attention through the voice of the adults who were understandably preoccupied with the technical dimensions of teaching in a new way. My professional experience indicates to me that this is a common error generally in teaching, often driven by external contextual pressures and exacerbated by leadership action which becomes too narrowly focused on outcomes, and not the processes undertaken to secure them. In this respect, the children can metaphorically 'drop off the shelf'. *To be effective, Instructional leadership must necessarily be responsive. This research would suggest that leadership needs to bridge the gap that can emerge when the agenda of adults and children diverge – whatever the antecedents to this.* The

instructional leaders needs to develop teaching practices which encourage responsiveness to the children; practices which direct the attention of adults back onto the social and emotional dimensions of teaching and learning in equal proportion to the cognitive aspects. This is what children say that they need; children want 'a professional heart' and this will determine their approach to the cognitive dimensions of the curriculum. *Tools and artefacts need to be developed to support this so that teaching becomes responsive to the children, cognitively, socially and emotionally, and embedded into whole school pedagogy.*

Tracing back to my previous discussion in relation to understanding the needs of adults, evidence from this research suggests that, in order to implement curriculum change, leadership must necessarily understand and attend to the needs of adults so that capacity is built to support adults and help them to respond precisely to the needs of the children. In order to understand the needs of children, feedback mechanisms need to be in place to gain clear insight to what the children's social, emotional and cognitive needs might be. The outcomes of this research suggest that particular emphasis need to be given to the social and emotional dimensions of learning and children's feelings about the cognitive strategies used to progress learning, as the technical aspect of the cognitive dimensions tends to already be a priority for teachers. The outcomes of this can then be either determined by the teachers themselves or fed back to teachers through leadership activity. I use the term **responsive instructional leadership** to refer to this cyclical aspect of leadership action which is focused on bridging the gap which can occur between adults and children throughout the process of teaching and learning. *Leadership, in this sense, acts as a kind of barometer evolving, leading and managing the environment within which child and adult learning takes place.*

(5) A Responsive Curriculum for Responsive Teachers – Implications for Policy and Practice

This research suggests that the process of shaping the curriculum needs to be owned by those within the organisation – children and adults. A 'packaged approach', in which the content of the curriculum is simply delivered to children, does not seems to be the most effective way to secure high standards of teaching and learning within schools. Additionally, curriculum content and associated practices need to incorporate the social and emotional dimensions of instruction in equal proportion to technical skills, tools and artefacts needed to enable learning. Attention needs to be afforded to adults and children alike. Leadership attention needs to be given to shaping the values which underpin the curriculum, the thinking that drives action in the classroom and the values that determine the opportunities afforded to the children. In order to achieve this, the professionals within the organisation need time to consider the values that

currently drive their practice so that a collective understanding can be established – a contextual body of knowledge that determines practice. This needs to be kept under review so that it can respond to the changing needs of the children.

From a policy stance, this is particularly important if familiarity in making decisions about the curriculum has been lost, as was the case for the teachers in English schools due to the highly centralised national agenda (Lumby, 2001). Taking time to explore the values of those bestowed with the responsibility of implementing curriculum change is not necessarily a leadership priority in all contexts. From the outcomes of this research, I suggest that it ought to be. To achieve this, leadership needs to attend to the structures, professional opportunities and the kinds of tools utilized that can access and shape knowledge, understanding and ultimately, the pedagogy.

Processes underpinning Instructional Leadership

(1) Instructional Leadership Functions

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) propose a model of ten instructional leadership functions which include; framing goals and communicating these, supervising and evaluating instruction, co-ordinating the curriculum, monitoring pupil progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility and promoting incentives for teaching. These have subsequently been categorised into three areas: defining the school's mission, managing the school's instructional programme and promoting a positive learning climate (Leithwood et al, 2006; Hallinger, 2009). In discussing the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), Hallinger (2008) makes the point that high scores on an instructional scale merely denotes the kind of activity which a leader may undertake but is not a measure of the effectiveness of leadership performance. As Hallinger (2008) observes, these leadership functions are not a recipe for success. *This research would suggest that many of the PMIRS leadership functions were necessary in implementing an inquiry curriculum but, as discussed, these alone were not enough.* It was necessary for these functions to be responsive to the views of the staff and the children. It was also vital that a key component of these instructional functions were attentive to the relationships within the context in which they operated. This would suggest that there is not a blueprint of leadership functions which can be imposed upon an organisation to achieve success which are devoid of context.

As previously discussed, by exercising instructional functions, instructional leaders can have a direct and indirect (Leithwood, 2006) influence on pupils' achievement. This research is able to not only comment of the functions of an

instructional leader but also suggests how these operate within a school context and the kind of practices which were would be effective to lead change and improve standards for children. This begins with the notion that the functions instructional leadership is not the sole responsibility of one person but needs to be distributed across the organisation (Harris, 2003; Lambert, 2002). It would have been virtually impossible to sustain an inquiry approach to teaching and learning had the teachers not embraced the philosophy underpinning inquiry and led the development of pedagogy across the curriculum. In line with Fullan (2001) assertion about leadership, *this research suggests, therefore, that a functional role of instructional leadership is also one which cultivates leadership in others*.

The need to understand how and why leaders engage in action to effect change is addressed by Spillane et al (2001) who argue that there is a need to understand the action which leaders pursue to effect change and distribute leadership. Within this analysis, it is accepted that separate, but interdependent, leadership action can contribute to the realisation of shared organisational goals. Robinson (2006) maintains the importance of leaders keeping their pedagogical content knowledge up to date to support them in their work. This was evident in my leadership experience for leading change. As an instructional leader it is not necessary to teach directly, but there is a need for clear professional knowledge of what is effective for children. *A key component of leadership action, as the person initially driving the change, was to keep my own knowledge of instructional practices up to date so that I was professionally in a position to be a 'lead learner' and direct the activities of the school to enhance the quality of inquiry teaching and learning* (DuFour, 2002). This was done through managing my own access to relevant training. Through voice activities and direct observation of teaching and learning, I was able to establish the needs of the children and adults. In response to this, I ensured that I initiated steps to update my professional knowledge this included: access to training, a wide range of reading, discussion with others, research, visit to other organisations and lots of thinking about new information and the relevance of this to my learning.

An aspect of the process involved in instructional leadership was also to initiate practices which enabled teacher and pupil voice to be heard so that it could be responded to. This involved changes to the organisation such as: timetabling in professional dialogue opportunities as an aspect of training, altering the structure for meeting with the children to personally engage in a discussion with them, initiating termly classroom voice sessions, feeding back to all staff the views of learners, altering the school evaluation structure to begin with an analysis of voice, setting up dialogue session on the information technology Learning Platform' and relaying voice activities to governors. *A key feature of*

these instructional practices was to ensure that the voice of the children was the starting point from which other practices emanated. How they achieved in the classroom in response to inquiry teaching also defined future practice. In this sense the leadership role is to engage in a process that generates information pertaining to the key elements of pupil response. Subsequently, leadership sets an expectation that this will be seen and heard by the adults within the organisation and that teaching will focus on developing practices which respond to enhance the quality of learning.

As part of the process of change and in evolving new instructional practices, there may temporarily be a dip in the quality of practice and associated outcomes. As instructional leadership is essentially about improvements to the practice of teaching and learning (DuFour, 2002), this may be initially difficult for an instructional leader to tolerate. Professional knowledge gained from this research leads me to conclude that *there is a need for an instructional leader to demonstrate a patient commitment to the route taken to secure change.* My professional learning in respect of this is most aptly described by the phrase 'speculate to accumulate'. There will inevitably be times within the change process where outcomes are less than what is ultimately desired; this was the case throughout this research, as discussed in chapter seven. However, that is reflective of the process of developing new skills and new ways of working which, through the cycle of responsive practices, will evolve even better outcomes for children.

In managing processes, evidence from this research suggests that a key function of an instructional leader's role is to *manage organisational mind- sets which underpin instructional practice; a mind-set which aims to view learning from the perspective of the child.* Children often produce outcomes which do not necessarily reflect the teacher's original intention. This is not necessarily problematic providing the child and teacher can identify what progress has been made. Developing instructional practice which requires the child to identify the learning that they have achieved through the application of tools and artefacts (which I shall discuss in more detail in the next section) creates an enabling approach. The teacher can identify progress and the child's learning journey is not inhibited. *A collective mind-set which refuses to see children's learning preferences problematic also supports the instructional leader's purpose.* If leaders promote the mind-set that we enter into our teaching relationship with children expecting them to present more resistance and challenge in areas where they are less enthused and less confident, we can plan learning in response to this. We can also use knowledge of children's preferences as a strength to support less secure areas.

A component of instructional leadership function is to promote professional development (Hallinger and Murphy, (1985). In order to be effective and to build capacity within the organisation, this research suggests that this process must necessarily be responsive; both to children and adults alike. *Organisational structures and practices need to access the voice of children and staff and observe, where relevant, contextual responses.* It would not have been possible to predict the professional development needs of the staff at the outset of this project. In view of how the children response to changes in practice, neither would it have been possible to predict the difficulties which they may encounter. *Instructional leadership process must therefore be responsive to the professional development needs of staff, with direct reference to the learning response of the children.* In the context of this research, this involved direct observation of practice, voice activities with the children, opportunities for adults to directly reflect on and discuss practice, peer observations, identifying professional development needs as an outcome of focused observations, integrating inquiry into formal tools designed for observation, allocating financial resources and time for professional development, engaging key external trainers, ensuring access across the whole staff and a heavy emphasis on contextual training; opportunities which promoted a 'collective think time' to review professional practice. To ensure that professional development was flexible and responsive, it was necessary to employ a flexible strategic approach to planning which was assisted by computer technology.

To secure positive outcomes as part of the change process, a crucial function of instructional leadership was to focus upon the wellbeing of the school. Some schools do require direct leadership attention to emotional wellbeing (Harris, 2007a). The challenge presented in evolving new instructional practices as part of this project, also denoted that attention was given to the emotional wellbeing of the school during this time of change. If a function of instructional leadership is to manage the school's instructional programme and create a positive learning climate (Leithwood et al, 2006; Hallinger, 2008), *this research suggests that the processes which underpin the management of a school's instructional programme need clear reference to practices which support, and are responsive to, the emotional, as well as the technical, work of teachers.*

(2) Tools and Artefacts

Spillane et al (2001) talks of leaders' work being mediated by tools and artefacts which are defining elements of leadership practice. My own professional experience helps me to recognise that teaching places extreme demands on an individual's time, both professionally and personally. A key component in developing tools and artefacts for learning should be to reduce the amount of time that teachers need to afford to activities that are not directly involved with

the children. Teachers that I have worked with, in many contexts, report that planning for learning can be an arduous and time consuming activity. Those participating in this research identified planning for inquiry as a key concern. In view of this, I responded to their need and devised planning formats which both reduced the amount of time required for teacher to spend planning learning, linked to the National Curriculum and provided a structure to guide the development of skills; all teaching staff were engaged in this process and adequate time was given to facilitate the creation of these documents. These tools will be revised in the light of the new National Curriculum in 2014 and similar principles of ownership, reduction in time and guiding content information, skills and attitudes information will be retained. Providing tools which facilitate effective time management is an important function of instructional leadership as time pressures on teachers may result in a task oriented culture where the completion of a task becomes more important than the process which it is intended to support. In developing tools for teaching, the finding of this research leads me to assert that *the role of an instructional leader must be to create a culture around teaching and learning which does not elevate organisational routines above the needs of the child*. The teachers participating in this research required tools to support planning; a role of instructional leaders is to ensure that these are fit for purpose, but ultimately emphasise the importance creating space so that the child remain the main focus – the process of planning is to further the development of the child. Tools and artefacts are key components in supporting this objective. However, how they are utilized is equally important. It was very clear to the children participating in this research when teachers were responding to their needs and facilitating choice, or whether they were simply 'delivering' a pre-planned lesson which was guiding their agenda.

The development of suitable tools and artefacts to support instruction was also evident in addressing standards for the children. As previously discussed, the benefits of a new approach to teaching are not always immediately evident in pupil outcomes. During this research, we observed a temporary dip in standards in some areas where the work of the children was being less prescribed and directed by an adult such as recording, writing and the approach of some children. The development of new tools and artefacts helped to address this problem. Writing frames to guide the children's thinking were produced; an assessment structure, broadening the remit of achievement focus was devised and observation frames to guide the teachers' reflection on learning were introduced. *Evolving tools and artefacts which support the instructional process and reflect a commitment to the agreed nature of this practice* is an important function of an instructional leader.

Manchester and Bragg (2011) discuss the ethos for schools 'as learning' and how structures and organisations deliver implicit messages to the children about the nature of society structures and mould the kind of expectations children have about their place and power in society. Children report that curriculum organisation influences how they approach learning, (Hughes, 2010). The children participating in this research expressed a preference for a 'fifty-fifty' partnership with their teachers to lead and direct their future learning; they wanted choice and for their views and experiences to be valued. In response to this, the kind of tools used to engage them in the assessment of learning needed to value the contribution that they make in evaluating their progress. The assessment and evaluation tools that we devised require the child, the teacher and the child's peers to engage in the process of assessment. A function of the *responsive instructional leader is therefore to be mindful of the implicit messages which curriculum tools conveys about to the child about their importance and right to participate in their learning journey.*

Focused observations, in depth discussions with the children and staff indicated that children require organisation for learning. Children like to know what is expected of them and express a preference for having some input into how their learning and classroom is organised. The children participating in this research strongly indicated that they found the social dimension of classroom organisation challenging. Teachers discussed the challenges that inquiry learning presented in terms of managing physical organisation for learning and the distribution to, and access of, resources within the classroom. Clearly, well thought through and purposeful organisation was required to facilitate inquiry learning and to promote independence. Teachers were required to teach strategies for independence explicitly to secure progress and needed to know when to intervene to facilitate the next step in learning and coach learning behaviours. Talk for learning emerged as an important feature of the inquiry curriculum and this required a scaffold to guide the children. All of these features of the classroom had implications for the tools and artefacts devised to support instruction.

How tools and artefacts are used and managed is significant for the instructional leader because their deployment delivers implicit messages to the children about the curriculum 'as learning'. This requires careful thought. Practice around display was a pertinent issue for the children participating in this research; they felt very strongly about the message that this sent about their value and influenced their perceptions of themselves as learners. Timetables which depict the learning organisation for different groups of learners can support routines but also deliver implicit messages about how much control the children are afforded or potentially fix children's perception of their ability. Talk frames as a

tool can inhibit the thinking process if used as a template for recording. Organising desks forward facing to the teacher sends messages about the locus of power and control within the classroom and who is the giver of knowledge. The quality of resources and degree of access to these might infer implicit ideas about the value of the child and the degree of trust afforded.

A role of the instructional leader is, therefore, to present the features of classroom organisation as an area to consider through professional dialogue or to establish the ways in which some tools and artefacts are used as non-negotiable so that the implicit message it conveys to children is consistent across the school. This is something that we are still exploring within my school and I envisage that this will be an endless cycle of reflection on our instructional practices. It can be challenging for some teachers to alter their practice in this respect because it affords them security in their working patterns and professional identity. We will continue on this journey.

(3) Instructional Leadership – The implications for Policy and Practice

To affect curriculum change, it is necessary to deploy the functions that are understood be inherent within an instructional leadership model, highlighted by Leithwood et al (2006) and Hallinger (2008) as defining the school's mission, managing the school's instructional programme and promoting a positive learning climate. This research is able to contribute to our knowledge of what a leader might do in order to influence the direction of these functions and thus infer implications for practice, as previously discussed. Over recent years there has been a propensity towards headteachers becoming solely administrators. There are even inroads into school business managers being directed towards NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship). I am wholly opposed to this policy. Schools are not successful because financial management is prudent or administrative systems efficient; these are just the background mechanisms to the core business of schools. I firmly believe that the most effective headteachers understand instruction and know what climate children perform best in – they understand children and how they learn. This research adds credence to this assertion.

Robinson (2006) emphasises the need for educational research to redirect energy towards the curriculum, pedagogy and the curriculum. In proposing a 'backward mapping logic', Robinson (2006) maintains that research should investigate how teachers actually make a difference to pupil's learning within the classroom and subsequently for schools to develop the conditions that are necessary to increase the positive impact on learning. This research would strongly support this notion.

I suggest that pupil and teacher voice should be an integral aspect of this type of practitioner research. By investigating practice within the classroom it was possible to establish areas in which teachers need to focus their technical attention such as interruptions in learning, classroom organisation, timely intervention, accessing help, managing error and misconception, employing the use of frames to guide approach to learning and talk and writing frames; all of which have been discussed in detail in chapter five. It was also evident that the messages that prevailing pedagogical relationships inferred were crucial. From a leadership stance, conditions which supported this were then created; conditions which facilitated: risk taking, provided emotional support for this and demonstrated a commitment to children and the agreed nature of practice. Researching what works for children facilitated a change in policy and led to improvements in practice; this seems to be a vehicle for connecting research to practice.

Additionally, as previously discussed, with the changing profile of educational policy which locates schools in a position to potentially drive educational practice, a 'backward mapping logic' (Robinson, 2006) facilitated by rigorous practitioner research seems to be a potentially influential way to further our knowledge of policy and practice which supports teaching and learning.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion and Thoughts for Further Inquiry

Introduction

I began this research journey by discussing the importance of listening to the voice of the child; giving them a say in the direction that their learning journey takes. Through the final discussion, I have identified some positive findings from practitioner research about how, through leadership action, this can be achieved. This final chapter draws together some of the key messages, about leading curriculum change, that have emanated from this research. Finally, this chapter closes by considering some implications for further research.

In Conclusion - Responsive Instructional Leadership

In closely examining the processes involved in leading curriculum change, I have evolved an understanding of leadership which I have termed Responsive Instructional Leadership; this requires a 'professional leadership heart' for both adults and children alike. Leadership action is guided in response to the views of others within the organisation to create a kind of barometer to determine where leadership activity needs to be directed and the intensity of leadership activity (alone and collaborative) that is required. As Cameron and Moss (2011) note, we are in a professional relationship with the child, our practices and organisation for instruction need to reflect this.

Southworth (2011) makes the point that the real challenge in connecting leadership to learning is not just what leadership is but in describing how successful leaders actually connect their practice to learning. This research suggests that a key function of an instructional leader's role is to lead an organisational mind set which demonstrates a commitment to the views and responses of the child. As I have demonstrated through my discussion, facilitating the voice of children and adults can be a highly effective because it provides clear mechanisms to enable the processes of change which are directly focused on the holistic aspects of teaching and learning. By building pedagogical relationships through voice activities, educational knowledge can be developed in response to contextual need. This leadership approach is centred on both the adults and the children within an organisation; building the professional social, emotional and technical dimensions of the former in order to support the evolving needs of the latter. In this respect, leadership action is an authentic response to the teaching and learning context in which it operates and retains, at the core of it, the teacher and how they respond to the child. To be effective, instructional leadership must necessarily be responsive. This research suggests that leadership needs to bridge the gap that can emerge when the agenda of

adults and children diverge – whatever the antecedents to this. The process of shaping the curriculum needs to be owned by those within the organisation – children and adults. Additionally, curriculum content and practices need to incorporate the social and emotional dimensions of instruction in equal proportion to technical skills, tools and artefacts needed to facilitate learning.

This research also suggests that there does not need to be an irreconcilable difference between pedagogical and instructional leadership theories (MacNeill & Silcox, 2003). To secure improvement and effective outcomes for children, one requires the other. With the ever growing reliance upon systems leadership, perhaps there is a need to reconceptualise how instructional leadership is enacted. It is physically impossible for a solitary person to directly impact on practice if they are to also meet the other necessary demands of a leadership role. In securing standards for all children indirect instructional leadership activity can enhance school effectiveness (Leithwood et al 2006). If instructional leadership is envisaged as leadership for learning, (Townsend et al, 2013), in that relationships and the distribution of leadership are considered integral, the potential to effective positive change is amplified.

This research contributes to our knowledge of how, what is traditionally understood as instructional and pedagogical leadership, can work in unison; one informing the other to create a leadership model that utilises the strengths in pedagogical and instructional conceptions of leadership – *a 'responsive instructional model'* in which pedagogical principles drive instructional leadership action. An improvement process can be premised on collaborative practices. Emanating from practice, this research demonstrates that a 'blueprint' for establishing efficient management systems does not need to be imposed from outside or devoid of wider social and intellectual concerns; this is likely to be ineffective and unsustainable. The development of management systems to stabilise organisations can be developed from leadership activity that is responsive to those within the organisation. As suggested by Robinson et al (2009), leadership needs to respond to teachers by directly addressing their concerns which emanate from practice but also address the conditions and contexts in which this occurs. Through a process of building systems and structures in response to need, this can build capacity which retains a purposeful focus on teaching, learning or both.

As responsive instructional leaders, we learn to know children in a deeper way; part of our remit is to develop practices and systems, supported by tool and artefacts to facilitate this knowing. This research has commented on *what* a leader might do and the systems and structures that might be put in place in order to secure positive outcomes for children. At the heart of this is

collaboration and negotiation that emanates from leadership practice grounded in social pedagogic principles. To effect curriculum change, there needs to be an organisational ethos which begins with emotionally and technically supported adults and is cascaded to the children; an ethos where learning can be derived from error as well as success. Children respond positively to a sense of being noticed (Gray et al, 2011). This research indicates that children want their teachers to guide and protect them cognitively, socially and emotionally. This provides children with a 'safety strap' which helps them to take risks and further their development. It is evident from this research that teacher action that pertains to the emotional and social dimensions of learning, determined relationships thus providing a precursor to teachers' capacity to instruct the children. Relationships require management; they require active leadership.

The tools and artefacts of instructional leadership (Spillane et al, 2001) were critical to effecting curriculum change; these were initiated in response to contextual need. In developing these, a key aspect of responsive instructional leadership is to ensure that these do not create a culture in which organisational routines take precedence above the needs of the children. This research suggests that tools and artefacts, such as planning documents, should guide practice but not be used to 'deliver' a curriculum to children without attention to their response to the learning planned for them. Tools to support instructional practices should also reflect a commitment to the agreed nature of this practice. If, for example, teachers notice a dip in standards through the process of change or observe specific challenges that the children encounter, tools are artefacts which can be utilized to enhance the quality of instruction or support the children in developing key cognitive skills or social and emotional attitudes. There is also a need for the responsive instructional leader to consider the implicit messages that tools and artefacts convey to children; this requires direct leadership action. What is used and how it is used can send implicit message to children both in terms of their perceived right to participate in decisions and judgment about their learning and the messages that the children receive 'as learning' and how they are valued within the organisation.

Reflecting on Professional Implications and Areas for further Research

(1) Reflections on Voice

Fielding and Rudduck (2002) cite respect, responsibility, challenge and support as the conditions under which pupils feel that they need to learn. Within my organisation, we have added reflection to this informed list. Educational systems within England are currently in a period of transition and as they evolve, schools must not lose sight of what children are telling us that they need. Having

engaged in this practitioner research, I feel confident that I will be able to manage change and lead the school to implementing the new National Curriculum designated for implementation in September 2014, without losing sight of what children need to learn. Equally, as the context of schools change through a school led system, lessons from this research will be invaluable to support the staff and children through the process of change. I will employ responsive instructional leadership.

This research began with the child and uses their voice to build organisational structures around them by attending to their responses. As Morgan (2009) argues, attention needs to be afforded to the kind of advice given to schools about how voice practices can be integrated into their organisational routines. Recently, with the pending introduction of performance related pay for teachers and a legislative led tightening of appraisal practice within schools, teacher unions are already citing voice feedback mechanisms negatively. It is suggested that feedback from children and parents should not be used to determine pay progression. This is an unfortunate development, and a likely consequence of the way in which voice was used to promote the standards agenda (Dunford, 2010), for a mechanism which has the potential to transform the way in which we work with children. There is a need to revisit teacher and pupil voice and to restore it to its intended purpose, not simply as a tool to support organisational performance (Fielding, 2001), but as a tool to champion the rights of the child to participate in decisions and the direction that their education takes (Rudduck & Wallace, 1996) and to value the professional contribution of teachers.

Governments have a clear vested interest in education. It is inevitable, that to some degree, they will prescribe what is taught or set a series of outcomes that support the economy and citizenship. Professionals, however, can provide the pedagogy; we can own this process. Voice activities allow greater participation in determining the culture of a school. Expertise, rather than formal position should be the basis for leadership authority (Copeland, 2003; Day & Harris, 2002). With integrated voice activities, leadership can readily access the expertise of others to define pedagogy. A Head Teacher cannot know the year one children like their teacher or understand the needs of special needs children like the SENCO; the professional views of all who have a vested interest in learners need to be heard. How voice activities can become embedded in practice would be an interesting area for further research.

(2) Reflecting on Leadership for the Future

Timperley (2005) makes the pertinent point that the distribution of leadership activity is only useful if the quality of that leadership is effective in the first

instance. One of the most enduring professional messages for me, having been engaged in this research, is how valuable practitioner research actually is in developing professional knowledge. The notion that schools are to become self-managing networks, leading on recruitment, training, support, strategy and research and development seems to be gathering momentum. The current Conservative Government are investing both time and finance into making this approach to education a reality. If this vision is actually realised through National and Systems Leadership practice and Teaching Schools, it seems to be that practitioner research must become a fundamental aspect of schools professional habits. If schools are to be at the forefront of new ways of working then a school led system must lead on teaching and learning. Individual schools and networks of schools need to have clarity about their practice; what works for learners and what does not. Those responsible for leading in this climate need to have a clear understanding of the role that they play in research and how this contributes to developing educational knowledge that can be disseminated to others. My own professional experience suggests that there is currently a gap in this respect; knowledge of practitioner research and engagement in research within schools is not as widely practiced as it needs to be. This has implications for the ways in which Universities evolve their future work with schools. There is a need for a bridge between the expertise of educational researchers within universities to disseminate their knowledge to teachers so that teachers can become researchers within their own contexts. If my current school is successfully accredited as a teaching school, my first priority will be to increase the research capacity of the teachers and schools within the alliance. I envisage all of the other strands of the teaching school agenda emanating from this. I shall most certainly continue my own professional learning through the practitioner research route.

In respect of systems leadership – the notion that one leader presides over a network of schools; this has implications for instructional leadership. I am now very clear, with regard to my professional understanding, that my leadership is effective because it is clearly focused on teaching and learning. However, in order to disseminate effective leadership practice, leadership must necessarily extend beyond the parameters of one individual school. This is something that I have had increasing experience of over the past four years and I can only see the demand for this increasing through National Leadership responsibilities. It is possible to share tools, artefacts and ways of working across schools. However, this is unlikely to provide sustainable solutions for improvement unless it is accompanied by practices which impact upon the culture of the school. From being engaged in this research, I have also been able to identify the need to transpose those dimensions of leadership which allow a responsive approach –

developing systems in response to contextual need. As an instructional leader, it is not always possible to impact directly on the learning of all children across a wide range of organisations.

In chapter one, I posed the question: Who and what is making a difference to children? This research indicates that responsive leadership action clearly does make a difference to children's learning. If we place this within the context of systems leadership, we need to carefully consider how leaders can continue to nurture their organisation from afar. Systems leadership denotes that leaders work with an increasing number of organisations. However, if we widen our understanding of instructional leadership to one which is responsive, part of the training for others in a leadership role becomes one which nurtures others to, in turn, nurture others. Leadership capacity needs to be distributed. This becomes possible if tools and artefacts associated with teacher and pupil voice become an integral aspect of schools practices and leadership provides an authentic response to this. When developing capacity for improvement across schools, therefore, as much attention to practices associated with the professional emotional development and security of adults and children should be given, in equal proportion to the technical aspects of teaching and assessment. Instructional leadership within a systems leadership scenario is about helping schools to become responsive and therefore self- sustaining learning organisations. Further research on how instructional leadership can be accommodated into a model of systems leadership and distributed more widely would be beneficial.

There is increasing emphasis being placed on pupil engagement; this is now a key component of the Ofsted Inspection schedule. If schools are to genuinely engage children, they need to know what matters to them. It seems untenable to set expectations for high standards and wait for this to happen, unless the antecedents and conditions are created to enable this. If schools want to know what children want and need, they require mechanisms to find out. Leadership needs to implement tools and artefacts that are suitable to context and systems leadership needs to coach others accordingly.

Similarly, there is a great deal of current emphasis upon 'closing gaps' in attainment between different groups of children. Leaders of schools in challenging circumstances, in particular, will be aware of the potential enormity of this task. As this research supports, a readiness to learn needs to be established before a child can and will participate in the curriculum opportunities that are offered to them, particularly if the child is required to take a lot of risks to realise their potential. According to the voice of children, there is a clear need to enhance children's sense of belonging. Engaging children in a

curriculum, that is potentially empowering as it develops learning from their valued interests and view point, might provide the impetus and motivation for children to develop the attitudes and resilience required to 'close the gap'. It simply has to be worth a try. Further research, focussed specifically on using a creative, child initiated approach to accelerating children's progress and reducing attainment gaps between groups of learners could create a potentially powerful body of knowledge. It would be extremely beneficial to consider how to use creative curriculum opportunities to enhance children's approach to learning so that their progress accelerates.

(3) Reflections on Further Research

One particular area of interest that has emerged is focused research on how an inquiry approach to teaching and learning may be used as a model to tackle the existing attainment gap between boys and girls. There is a tendency to 'pathologise' the way that boys learn but is seems to me that the issue does not lie within male children but within the formal structures that we use to educate them. It would be interesting to research how giving greater control over the curriculum, through inquiry or otherwise, might impact on levels of achievement and attainment of boys.

I also believe that there needs to be further research into the way that we train practitioners, and the impact that this has on developing professional identities and future practice. There is something relating to the underpinning values about how children should be educated, and principles held about how children learn best that appears to be crucial in determining the kind of cultural climate that operates within different classrooms. An interesting dimension of this, within this research project, was that support staff appeared to have a more open minded and child centred approach to curriculum development; they did not exhibit the same fears as the teachers. It is quite possible that that support staff have not been subjected to the standards and performativity agenda in the same way that teachers have. Further research into how leadership manages the cultural dynamics within a school, to retain a child centred approach, is needed; cultural dynamic which allows practitioners to truly respond to pupil voice to direct teaching and learning. This would ultimately be very useful to facilitate an understanding of how external contextual pressures might support or inhibit learning.

One specific outcome of this research that really surprised me as a practitioner was the importance that children placed on school display. They have very strong feelings about how this is managed and the hidden messages that this infers about their capability; this inevitably has an influence on the self- esteem

that they develop as a learner. A really interesting area for further inquiry would be to take an in depth look at pupil voice in relation to display and explore ways in which display can be used to significantly contribute to securing high levels of self- worth and achievement.

It is well documented that parental expectation is a key indicator of pupils' success. Pupil and parental attitudes to homework would be an interesting area of research. Retrospectively, omitting parents from my research agenda was a weakness in the research design. It would be extremely useful to develop a community voice led model of homework that helps to facilitate children's learning but also enables parents to feel empowered and able to accommodate learning at home into, what appears to be, ever increasing time constraints.

In typical inquiry fashion, I have ended with more questions than answers.

(4) A final Reflection

Engaging in practitioner research has provided me with a great deal of insight into my leadership practice; an insight that will endure throughout the rest of my career. The most significant lesson that I can personally conclude from this journey is aptly described by Day et al (2000, p24)

"Leadership is as much about developing the self alongside high levels of emotional commitment as it is about capacity building in others; and that effective leadership requires an intelligent head with an intelligent heart.

The link of this personal learning to the professional self is provided by Boddy (2011, p114)

"The heart also needs the head – the balance brought by professional knowledge and reflection on a relationship."

This research has been an inquiry into the development of inquiry. I shall give the final word to proponents of inquiry, Aulls & Shore (2008, p23), who provide an apt description of what anyone engaged in the inquiry process should be trying to achieve.

"The goals on inquiry are discovery, being inquisitive, being a problem finder and problem solver, being a thinker, and doing what you can to create meaning on your own. The idea of producing knowledge that is meaningful to yourself and others, and using knowledge to accomplish purposes that include those you set yourself or that you believe in, is central to inquiry."

It is rather like being a doctoral student really. Through the process of inquiry, I have discovered much about my practice as a leader; knowledge that I hope will inform my future actions and the guidance that I give others in a similar role. Without those who choose to lead alongside me, I have no authority to affect positive change for the children in our school. The teachers and I have encountered problems; we have found solutions and then generated even more questions of our own; together we continue to explore the answers to these. I have arrived at a deeper understanding of my professional self, my leadership practice and we have arrived at collective understanding to guide our instructional, pedagogic practice. We are using the knowledge that we have co-constructed to self-direct direct our own learning – children and adults alike. In pursuing an issue that I am passionate about, I hope that I have contributed knowledge to our understanding of curriculum change, knowledge from which others can learn and transfer to their organisation. I will continue this journey throughout the remainder of my professional life, but I must bring this chapter of my journey through leadership to a close. From the voice of the child, as is so often evident in their early writing…

THE END …

Appendix Section

APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I am currently engaged in part time study at the University of Nottingham. As part of the EdD course, I am undertaking a research project that explores the leadership of curriculum change. This will eventually be written as a thesis outlining the major findings. The purpose of my research is to investigate what I need to do as a Head Teacher to develop a curriculum that provides opportunities for child initiated inquiry. I hope that this study will also enable those taking part to have a voice and express their views about any changes that are implemented.

COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA

In order to collect information, I will be using the following methods:

Focus Group Discussions

This is a general group discussion where specific research themes or questions are presented, for volunteers taking part, to talk about. The duration of each session will not exceed an hour and will be conducted in time that is ordinarily scheduled for staff meetings. With the permission of the participants, the discussion will be audio taped. Across the period of one year, there will be six focus group discussions for the duration of the research. Within two weeks of each session, a written summary will be provided for those taking part.

Semi-structured Interviews

These interviews are to be conducted with volunteers on an individual basis. They will be arranged during the school day and will not exceed an hour. Arrangements will be made for volunteers to be released from regular duties should they wish to take part. With the permission of the participants, each interview will be audio taped. It is anticipated that each volunteer will be interviewed three times in total across a one year period. Following each interview, a confidential written overview of the interview will be given to those taking part.

Focused Observations

The purpose of this is to collect information on the learning behaviours of the children and effects of curriculum change over time. Volunteers will initially participate in the development of an observation schedule to guide focused and ethical observations within classes. Then, for the duration of the project, each direct participant will engage in a 30 minute paired observation with myself. It is anticipated that each volunteer will participate in 6 focused observations throughout the research. I will compile a general overview of findings and distribute this to Staff each term.

Group Interviews with Children

This aspect of the research does not involve the adults as direct participants in the research. However, as a consequence of the children being in a class, adults may be indirectly participating. Six children will be invited to directly participate in the research and asked to take photographs within their class so that they can come and discuss their ideas and views in a group interview every two weeks. The duration of this aspect of the research is six weeks that may be repeated in two blocks.

What and how will the data be used?

The data that is collected is to answer research questions and will be used for academic purposes only. The only persons having access to the original data will be myself and my tutors Professor Patricia Thomson and Dr. Alison Kington, both can be contacted at The School Of Education, Nottingham University. The identity of participants will be concealed in any transcript material produced as a result of discussions or interviews. The only other people having access to transcribed data, where the identity of the participants is concealed, will be persons involved in the research to support my accuracy in analysing the data. Aspects of discussions, interviews or

observation notes may be reproduced in writing the thesis or for associated academic papers. In all instances, the anonymity of the participants will be preserved by changing or not reporting names. It will not be possible to identify particular individuals. The safety and confidentiality of all participants will be paramount throughout the research process.

In accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and The British Education Research Association, any material that is stored, electronically or otherwise, will be coded so that the specific identity of the participants is concealed. Therefore original data and named participants will be stored separately. Data will not be stored on the school site and any backup information will stored securely.

RESEARCHER'S ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTICIPANTS' ROLE

There are two stands to participation in this research:

(i) **Indirect participation** – This concerns entry into the classroom, whereby Staff grant permission for entry into the classroom for the purpose of research. This may involve focused observation or may involve the children taking photographs so that they can participate in a group interview concerned with their views of curriculum change.

(ii) **Direct participation** – Where participants agree to directly contribute to the research by volunteering to take part in any or all of the following: focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews or focused observations.

If you elect to become a direct participant you retain the right to:

- Full confidentiality and anonymity.
- Participate in some aspect of the research and not others.
- Withdraw from the research at any point.
- Request that interviews are not audio taped or ask for the recording to be stopped at any point during a discussion of interview.
- Ask for specific comments to be disregarded as data during an interview or observation.
- Provide consent for audio recording on some instances and not others.
- Request to terminate a discussion, interview or observation at any point.
- Withdraw any part or all of your data prior to the end of January 2011.
- Request to view any data that specifically relates to you.
- Request copies of any transcript or summary material produced as a result of discussion, interviews or observations

If you are willing to participate in some or all aspects of this research, please complete a consent form. This is a requirement of Nottingham University's conduct for researchers.

If you would like further information or clarification please feel free to come and discuss any matters with me.

Many thanks

Lorraine Cullen

CONSENT FORM FOR PRACTITIONER RESEARCH PROJECT

- The purpose of this research has been explained to me by Lorraine Cullen and I have been given written information to assist my understanding.
- I have a clear understanding of the purposes of this research and I am aware that my involvement in it is voluntary.
- My permission to participate indirectly or directly has been requested.
- I understand that by giving indirect consent I am allowing aspects of the research to be undertaken in my classroom either through focused observations or via the children taking photographs.
- I understand that if I give direct consent, I am agreeing to participate directly in those aspects of the research that I have indicated below.
- I understand that by giving either indirect or direct consent to participate, my status now or in the future will not be affected.
- I understand that this research is for academic purposes.
- If I agree to directly participate in the research, I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any point without risk or prejudice.
- I understand that I have the right of access to any data that concerns me.
- I understand that I retain the right to withdraw any of the data that I am directly concerned with up to the end of January 2011.
- I understand that some of the data that I am concerned with may be reproduced in written form but that my identity will be concealed by the use of a pseudonym.
- I understand that data will be stored securely in line with the Data protection Act and The British Educational Research Association and be taken off the school site. I have been informed that it will not be possible to identify me in any transcript material produced from the original data and the only persons having access to original, un-transcribed material are Lorraine Cullen or her tutors.
- I recognise that my safety and right to confidentiality will be preserved throughout this research process.
- I understand that I have the right to contact the researcher, her tutors or the School of Education at Nottingham University if I wish to make a complaint regarding the conduct of this research.
-

Professor Patricia Thomson email: patricia.thomson@nottingham.ac.uk
telephone: (0115) 8467248

Dr. Alison Kington email: Alison.kington@nottingham.ac.uk
telephone: (0115) 9514420

Administration email: Jacqueline.stevenson@nottingham.ac.uk

PLEASE TICK THE BOXES TO INDICATE YOUR CHOICES
(please ensure that you definitely complete either (i) or (ii)

EITHER

*(i) I **do not wish** to **participate indirectly** in any aspects of this research.* ☐

OR

*(ii) **I agree** to **participate indirectly** in all aspects of this research.* ☐

ALSO

I also agree to participate directly in the Focus Group Discussions. ☐ Focus Group

I also agree to participate directly in the Semi-Structured Interviews ☐ Interviews

I also agree to participate directly in the Focused Observations ☐ Observations

SIGNED _____ DATE: _____

Thank you for your time, it is greatly appreciated.

PLEASE RETURN THIS TO ME AND I WILL RETURN A SIGNED COPY TO YOU FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

LORRAINE CULLEN

APPENDIX 2

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS PROMPTS – June 2010

1. What do you think the children really understand about the process of inquiry?

2. What are your views about the purpose of display?

3. What are your views about how to motivate children and to maintain a good pace of learning?

4. How do you know if the children are enjoying their learning and does it matter?

5. What are your views about the purpose of education?

6. What are your views on the children's capacity to make choices?

7. What do you think that the children know about the ability of others?

8. What are your views about how adults transmit values to the children?

9. What are your views about the children's current levels of understanding about the attitudes and skills necessary for inquiry?

10. What are your views about the most recent training undertaken for inquiry and where would you like to go next?

APPENDIX 3

Dear Parents,

At the moment, the school is engaged in the process of curriculum change. The purpose of this is to modernise the curriculum to fully meet the needs of all the children. We are also preparing for the anticipated changes to the National Curriculum which is expected in 2011.

For the past three years, I have been involved in part time study at the University of Nottingham. As part of this EdD course I am undertaking a research project that explores the leadership of curriculum change. This will eventually be written as a thesis outlining the major findings. The purpose of my research is to investigate what I have to do as a Head Teacher to develop a curriculum that promotes opportunities for child initiated enquiry. Our Governing Body have already approved the research proposal and I will give them regular progress reports via my Head Teacher reports to governors.

My general concern is to find out how we can successfully give children choices about curriculum content and opportunities to direct their own learning experiences. My aim is to maintain or enhance standards while developing a curriculum that reflects the interests of the children.

Some of the older children will be invited to participate directly in the research by taking part in group interviews or by providing samples of their class work. If this is the case, they and you, will be contacted directly in order to seek your written permission on an individual basis. All children who directly participate in the project will do so entirely voluntarily.

The majority of the children will be indirectly participating in the research by virtue of the fact that they attend the school. The way in which their approach to learning alters as part of curriculum change will be monitored and reported upon as part of the research process. No specific children will be identified by name and all reporting about the school and the children will be completely anonymous.

If you do not wish your child to indirectly participate in this research project please notify me by email on: xxx or drop a written note at the school office.

If you would like any further information about this research project please feel free to arrange an appointment for a personal chat or email me on the above address. My research proposal is also available by request.

This research will be monitored closely by the ethics board at the University of Nottingham and if you have any concerns or wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the research please contact professor Patricia Thomson on Telephone: (0115) 8467248 or email: patriciathomson@nottingham.ac.uk

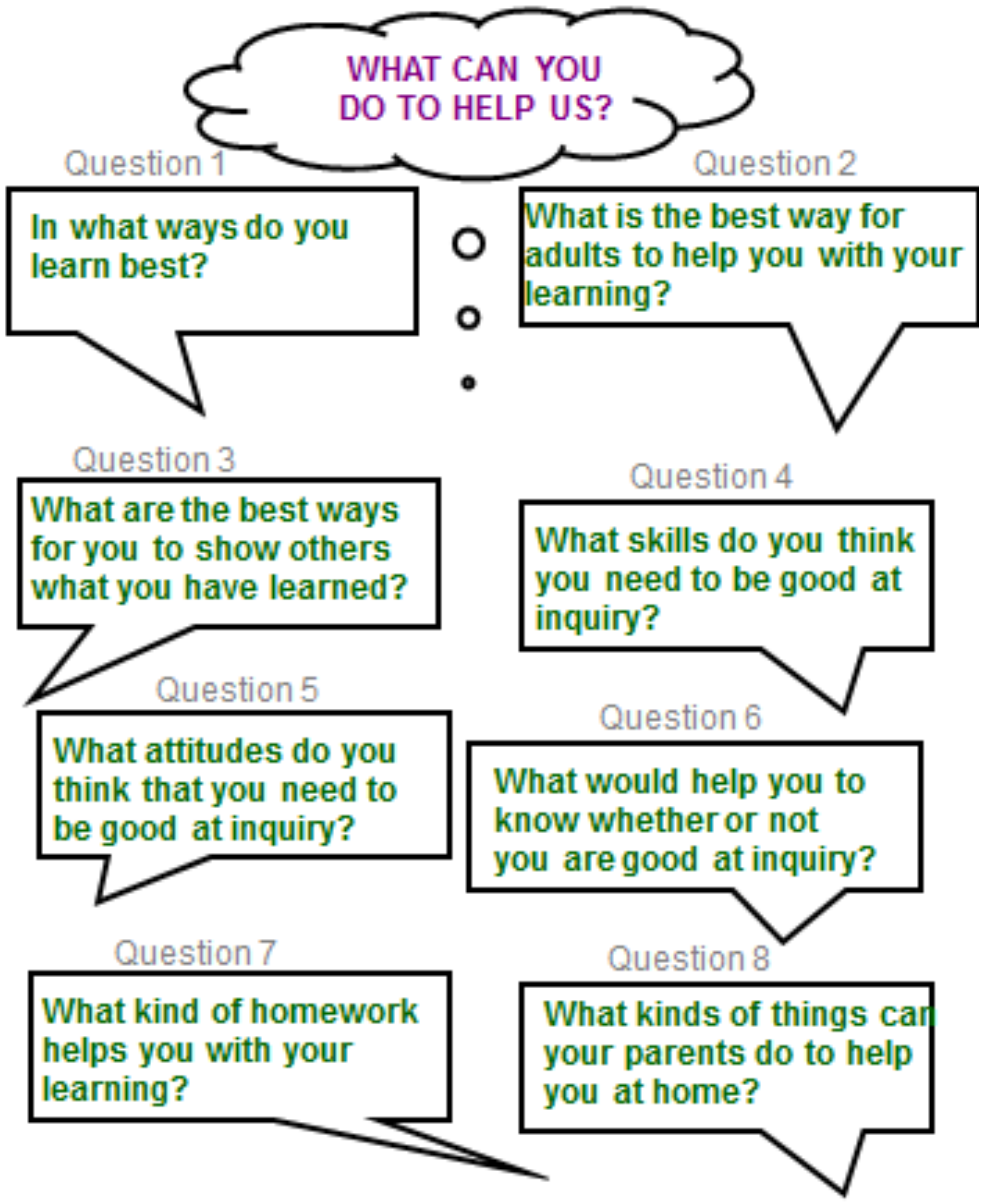
In contributing to one aspect of curriculum change, I am hoping that this project will help to facilitate continued success. In developing a strong curriculum that is responsive to the changing need of learners, I hope that we can better prepare your children for their future.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Lorraine Cullen

APPENDIX 4



Take 2 photographs for each question for us to talk about

APPENDIX 5

TL	Self-Direction		
	How do you feel when adults make decisions for you?	26.37	I'm a bit annoyed 'cause like I remember when we did our Katy stole the fire, we got to do people and the rest got animals. '*Cause the teachers choose that*
		27.22	If the people that are the most clever, they can choose different things.
TL	Social Development		
	What's the best way to share your work with others?	2.44-2	Maybe you could like, like what we use to do put our work at the back.
		10.02-2	I don't mind working with lots of different people as long as I get my work done.
	Who prefers to work alone?	22.33-2	(3 out of 6) Umh.. because you don't get distracted.
		23.00-2	I feel that it's better because when you're working with a partner you have your head down and you're writing then suddenly somebody pats you on the back and it's your partner.

APPENDIX 6

Overview of analysis- Group Interviews - Year 6

Interview 1

- A female pupil chose to present a picture of the end product that she produced when working in a pair. She went on to discuss how some children mess around when given a choice while others just get on with it. **(SOCIAL CHOICES)**
- The same pupil then showed images of a display that they put up with the help of their teacher. **(DISPLAY)**
- A male pupil presented an image to show how the children are getting on well when given a choice.
- The children suggested that they felt a bit controlled when the adults make all of the choices. One pupil recognised that at time this was important because it helped with ideas for inquiry. The idea of being given different possibilities for choice was favoured by the children – a range of ideas was preferred. **(CHOICE)**
- A female pupil introduced an image of the children working well together. One pupil preferred to work alone so that he could set his own pace. **The teacher evidently guides the children's decisions about making choices rather than prohibiting their choices. The children were able to reflect well on this and it appears to be informing their judgements. (CULTURE)**
- When making choices the children suggest that the teacher encourages them to challenge themselves; they felt that in most cases when given a choice.
- The children believe that the adults probably think that they make good choices. Even if the teacher thinks that it is not a good group he still allows the children to stick with their decision. **The culture that the teacher is setting in allowing the children making errors seems to instil a greater sense of responsibility for the children, they talk very calmly about the decisions that they make. This seems to be more beneficial than prohibiting children's choice and allows them in a safe context to reflect on their decisions. (TEACHER'S ROLE)**
- The children presented images of children working well together and the idea of getting on and producing came across quiet strongly as they discussed their images. **(SOCIAL CHOICES)**
- The children felt that decision making between the adults and the children should be equally shared with a teacher stepping in when necessary. A male pupil suggested that he would like a little more freedom he believed that this would be the case at secondary school. The other children supported this idea. **(CHOICE)**
- A male pupil discussed how he would handle it if people are not working in his group.
- An image of display was introduced by a male pupil. The children said that they were producing a lot of work in such a short period of time because they were enjoying their learning and the teacher was

gently setting high expectations for them. They discussed the idea that although they were being given a lot of choice, they were still doing lots of work. **(APPROACH TO LEARNING)**

- Resources were freely introduced through images. The children discussed the importance of ICT for research, information, vocabulary and presentation.
- The children suggest that producing leaflets help. Hands on experiences were favoured. The children spoke about anticipated opportunities at secondary school.
- The kind of equipment and books available for the children were introduced through images. The use of books and their usefulness were discussed. A male pupil felt that books were a more useful resource than ICT because they were likely to be more accurate. A female pupil suggested that the internet did not explain issues. The restriction on internet sites was also mentioned. **(RESOURCES)**
- Trips were considered helpful only if the children behaved on them. A female pupil suggested that trips can create an atmosphere and some trips can teach you how to work together and cooperate. **(AFFORDANCE)**
- The children felt that not all visitors were good. One male pupil suggested that they may be amazed how differently we learn to other schools. A female pupil suggested that we had to behave unnaturally when visitors were about. **(AFFORDANCE)**
- Books as resources were discussed by a female pupil.
- To make inquiry better a pupil suggested theme linked trips so that they had real experiences. A male pupil suggested that that may be difficult with inquiry because everyone was doing different things.
- The idea of going on trips with people that you don't want in your group was unfavourable to as female pupil who felt that choices of how groups are composed should be given. **(SOCIAL CHOICE)**
- A female pupil introduced display through an image; she felt that the kind of display that were helpful was a range of things. A male pupil liked the idea of teachers putting up children's work not just facts. The children felt that they could learn from each other. **(DISPLAY)**
- The majority of the children felt more comfortable talking to adults about their learning. **This seems to have something to do with how the teacher facilitates the culture within the classroom. If they develop trust the children seem more likely to want to talk about their ideas to an adult.**
- This group of children quite liked the idea of desks being less social because if you are on a table with someone who messes around you are less distracted.
- A female pupil likes the idea of working in small groups. A male pupil prefers to be individual so that he doesn't feel embarrassed if he gets something wrong. **The idea of feeling awkward and embarrassed with peers comes up a lot. Work on laying down explicit expectations and discussion in this area should be developed across year groups. (SOCIAL)**

- The children discussed how they favoured different foundation subjects such as DT and Geography and making plays. The idea of thinking skills was favoured.
- After school club ideas with a difference were discussed.
- The notion of not having time to complete things was raised.
- The teacher making choices for some children was favoured by one male pupil.
- The children liked the idea of working in mixed ability groups.
- A male pupil commented that children who were not very good at playtimes you could tell who they were by their approach to learning.
- The issue of gender and children pairing with each other instead of the opposite sex was discussed. The children agreed that this was a reason for the teacher sometimes choosing groups. **The idea that the teacher makes groupings explicit and justifies this to the children**
- A male pupil suggested that he prefers working with girls because he doesn't like boys. He said he feels comfortable with this. **(CHOICE)**
- The children thought that inquiry enabled them to be more creative because they can decide how they present their ideas and think about how to tackle a task.

Interview 2- How do we feel

- The children felt that learning through inquiry allowed you do stuff and find out more that you haven't learned about subjects where as in other areas you might be learning what you already know.
- The importance of the environment was introduced by a female pupil but she said the future would be worse if we do not look after the environment.
- A male pupil suggested that outdoor learning could be prohibited by the weather. **(AFFORDANCE)**
- The children felt that inquiry made the day go quicker.
- On pupil commented that time was important in completing tasks because he sometimes panicked to complete written tasks. **The idea of inquiry placing demands on writing comes up a lot in this interview. This may be linked to teacher expectation or that fact that inquiry demanded a lot of writing to present ideas.**
- The children discussed the kind of subjects that they enjoy and what they would include in an open curriculum. Preferences differ but R.E. is unpopular and art popular.
- The children like inquiry because it creates choice and allows you to incorporate a lot of other subject into it. It was also suggested to allow more freedom. The idea of adding in different subjects was favoured and that it allowed you to contrast places and ideas. **(CHOICE)**

- The kind of things that the children find difficult is to fit everything in about inquiry. Cooperation was suggested as being difficult as some children make more effort than others. The children agreed that they make more effort of they enjoy something. **(MOTIVATION)**
- A teacher would now if the children are enjoying something by the fact that they discuss it. **(MOTIVATION)**
- The social dynamics of working with other children was discussed. Two male pupils prefer to work with people who let them get on. Choice was considered important in this respect. A female pupil felt the choice may be a friend or at times if you needed to express your ideas you would choose a chatty person. We need to teach children to make informed choices so they know what they are looking for. The choice in choosing people to work with and time was reported by a female pupil. A male pupil finds it difficult sometimes to integrate into a group because his interests do not match those of others even though he would have preferred to work in a group. **(SOCIAL)**
- A female pupil found using information from the internet difficult to resolve this she turned to books. **(RESOURCES)**
- Being active and healthy was introduced. The children suggested that they enjoyed this kind of learning. **This group of children tended to have a broad range of interests compared to the other children interviewed. I am not sure if this is a reflection of their age or the way that their teacher manages their learning experiences.**
- Issues around choosing a partner was introduced was discussed by a female pupil. She also commented on time constraints limiting the production of quality writing at times. **(TIME)**
- Two boys discussed the idea that they like to stick to their ideas. One male pupil discussed the ideas behind children's choices based on whether they were keen to work or not. **(SOCIAL)**
- Issues around the environment were introduced through images. She imparted a degree of factual knowledge about the environment. The idea of having to grow up in the environment was a concern to the children. **(AFFORDANCE & SOCIAL CHOICE COMES UP A LOT IN THIS SECTION)**
- The children are given opportunities to talk about their learning. They expressed concern about how other people reacted to their work. The notion of being high quality was a concern. Feeling nervous about discussing work was raised by one boy. The children felt that the teacher should comment on their work but not in front of the whole class because this can cause humiliation. **(TEACHER'S ROLE)**
- The idea of another person claiming his work as their own was discussed by one male pupil**. (CULTURAL CLIMATE)**
- A pupil discussed homework and how some children manage their learning for inquiry by just printing off. We discussed the thinking for this. The general approach of others was discussed and the children have certain expectations of each other. The approach of

some children was suggested to be improved if they enjoy a particular activity. **(CULTURAL CLIMATE)**

- The amount of work produced by some children was mentioned by a male pupil. The teacher giving them a chance but claiming that you can normally guess who is not delivering.
- The idea of reading was introduced through imagery to note that the children do not just use the internet. The idea of having reading books chosen for children was noted by a female pupil. Another female pupil commented that the stock of reading books needed to appeal more to their preference (more like 'adult stories').
- The approach of children was mentioned by a male pupil.
- A make pupil spoke about the role of the teacher and how he was trying to help each other. Through imagery he discussed how the children were trying to concentrate. He has clear ideas about how teachers and children should behave in the best interests of others. He also spoke about hygiene and children washing their hands. A brief discussion about this and the possible use of hand gel ensued. A number of solutions to encourage hand washing were persistently offered. **The children have a very different agenda to adults; the things that concern them are sometimes very surprising.**
- One pupil wanted to retain stock in the library so that he could read historical texts.
- Through images, a male pupil discussed an organised approach. He said he felt good when he had achieved what he did not think he cold initially do. A female pupil suggested that she felt confident to work alone next time if she had completed a successful inquiry. A male pupil said he felt proud of himself when he had done lots of work.
- When asked how they felt sharing work with one another, the children suggested: a male pupil said he hated it (not 'hate, hate') because he would be happy to show it to the class but not a few people in case they steal your idea. Another male pupil said only if he thinks others would be interested. Another male pupil suggested that not all people show an interest and that does not make him feel happy when he has put in a lot of work. Listening to each other was very important to the children. A female pupil supported this. Another female pupil liked showing it to the class but showing to group did not guarantee their attention. **Perhaps the management of the teacher comes into play here. Children, even at the top of the school need this guidance**. **The idea of how children respond to each other is important and comes up across the data. This is an area that is likely to require further exploration and aspects of explicit teaching**. **Including this as an expectation in an assessment and evaluation system would be useful. (CULTURE CLIMATE)**
- How children's work (including assessment papers) is treated was mentioned by a female pupil. The children agreed that they should be given the choice to take these home. This led to a discussion about display. A female pupil felt that the teacher only picked the good work to go on display but she felt that everyone should get a

chance to show their work. The idea that everyone is good at something and being part of the class as well came up. The idea of being made to feel that you are not good at something if your work is not selected was discussed. A male pupil suggested that each class should have a board and choose the work that they put up. The children would always like their work to be returned to them. **What comes across strongly is the idea that all children should be represented in display and to not do this has an adverse effect of how the child feels about their ability and feeling of inclusion. (DISPLAY AND INCLUSION)**

- The children suggested that they choose different people to work with because they are your friend and someone you usually talk to. A female pupil suggested that she did not like it when group were chosen for them. Another male pupil supported this and suggested it was difficult to work with people that you do not like. One male pupil suggested that it should be a 60% 40% divide between the adult and the child. He felt it was important for the teacher to choose because s/he would base it on your best interests and that's what school was for. He did agree that it was annoying to have to work with someone that you did not want to. The children did agree that they did learn from working with someone they found a challenge. The reasons that the children choose other to work with are: whether they are friendly, they get on, when they are hardworking, have good ideas and sometimes a laugh and not always on the work; my friend or people who want to do what I want to do or people who are left out; behaviour, attitude and relationship (depending on who else is in the group); behaviour, organisation and chatty when I want them to be; people that hardworking; silly at the right time, I would choose. A female pupil spoke about one male in the class who gets left out a lot because he is a challenge to work with because of his immature behaviour. **The children do acknowledge the need for adults to support their choices but they feel very uncomfortable working with some children. This may be more pronounced as they become older and more self-conscious. It might be worth tackling this lower down the school. (SOCIAL CHOICE)**
- The children agree that they learn about others from working with them. The notion of structures scaffolding mature working was discussed. When this is relaxed children who need a lot of structure find it harder to cope. The children were astute in their observations of this. **(APPROACH TO LEARNING)**
- Children paring up for sports was discussed by one male pupil and how a boy was constantly left out by the other children. Another male pupil spoke about how he tried to support him and give him advice to help him to moderate his behaviour. **(CULTURE)**
- The children felt that inquiry could help about learning about people in different cultures but felt it was better if we also learned a language such as Spanish as it was more meaningful to help us learn about other cultures. A male pupil felt that learning about different cultures taught some people about respect. A male pupil

felt after school classes for languages would be good. **(AFFORDANCE)**

- Through the introduction of an image a male pupil discussed how other children had recorded their work using a pie chart; another group had made a pizza. Given free choice the children would choose to record their work creatively, they did not always feel the need to record something permanently. **(CHOICE)**
- One mail pupil discussed the need to be a bit more social when doing some kinds of work but not all of the time. If given a choice about how to work the children suggested that this tended to depend on what they are doing only one child maintained that he preferred to work alone all of the time. They found the following things difficult when working in a group: co-operation; wanting to do different things. A female pupil suggested that it was sometimes difficult to express ideas because other people prohibit it. **(SOCIAL)**
- Through the use of images a female pupil discussed how the other children work, she highlighted one male pupil who always tried to do the right thing even when not being supervised. She also discussed other children's creatively and the importance of being allowed to record creatively. A male pupil spoke about an image showing how hard the children are working and how creative they are. **(APPROACH TO LEARNING)**

Interview 3 – How can you help?

- A female pupil believes that she learns best with visual things or acting things out. A male pupil believes he learns best when he has free choice about how he learns. Another male pupil thinks it depends on the teachers. The kind of teacher who helps you to learn best is suggested to be: one that involves everything; one who does practical work; one that is relaxed and encourages you. When teachers are threatening a male pupil suggests it makes him nervous and shy. A female pupil likes all kinds of teacher but some are boring. In assembly a female pupil would prefer teachers to pick older children. **(AFFORDANCE/CULTURAL CLIMATE)**
- A male pupil suggested that he preferred to work on his own because he got more done and tends to argue in a group. **(SOCIAL)**
- A male pupil suggests that children need a variety and do more of some subjects. The children prefer the idea of being taught in subjects linked to a theme or a theme by itself so that you can bring in other subjects which helps to focus thinking. A female pupil suggested that themes help you to research. Another female pupil expressed a preference for a theme so that she could incorporate more subjects. The children like to do DT. A male pupil suggested that it would be a good idea to do different subjects within the same time. Another male pupil suggested that a selection of what you should learn could be given and the most voted for could be studied that week. A male pupil disagreed with this because not

everyone's' preference in the minority would be reflected in the curriculum. The children spoke about how choice could be given for our extension curriculum. **(AFFORDANCE)**

- The best way for adults to help is to: show you work to the teacher so they know what you are up to so that you can be told how to improve. The use of support staff was discussed and how choices could be given to children if support staff led different subjects. A male pupil suggested that Learning Support should also work with more of the class and not just those who struggle**. (ADULTS ROLE)**
- The idea of sharing work with the whole class was introduced again because small groups of children do not always listen. **(CULTURAL CLIMATE)**
- A female pupil spoke about a pupil who was supposed to be presenting in class but who was not organised and how this had an impact on everyone else who wanted to share theirs. She felt he needed to be more organised so as not to waste the time of others who felt proud of their work. A male pupil suggested that many of the boys were not organised despite how much effort the teacher was putting in. **(APPROACH TO LEARNING)**
- A female pupil liked the idea of a child coming up and teaching something instead of a teacher boring them. A male pupil likes one to one working with an adult. Another male pupil supported this as he felt uncomfortable asking questions in front of the whole class. He also liked the idea of talking to another child about his work because children often felt more comfortable talking to another child. He spoke about the different use of language between adults and children (i.e. epic and good). He thinks being taught by another child would be more fun because of the language style. Another male pupil suggested it depended on what subject was taught because no child would like to deliver sex education. He agreed it depended how comfortable you are. **(AFFORDANCE/CULTURAL CLIMATE)**
- A female pupil suggested that if you give children completely free choice not many children would go to certain subjects.
- Another female pupil spoke about people choosing different partners to work with and how they should stick to their word and not change it because it can result in you feeling left out.
- A female pupil spoke about the use of laptops to help you to learn, The issue if display arose.
- A male pupil spoke about the boys playing football all of the time and he thinks they may be bored of playing it but may be afraid of saying it. A male pupil said that often when he plays football he feels left out because they just run around you.
- The children suggest that you need the following skills to be good at inquiry: it depends, not on how much you do, it's all about the content as long as it's detailed and explains a lot. Attention was then diverted away from this. **The children are not strong on identifying the skills needed for inquiry learning.**

- Through use of an image, a female pupil spoke about how working practically helps her. A male pupil suggested that many children think they are kinaesthetic but that many people were also visual as well.
- A female pupil spoke about the allocation of Mater classes and suggested that different children are offered them each year.
- A male pupil suggested that he knew that he was doing well when he felt proud of it, that's all that matters not what a teacher thinks. Another pupil disagreed with this suggesting that you may still feel proud but if the teacher does not agree then you need to up your game. A female pupil commented that you feel upset if a teacher is critical. The idea of a teacher photocopying others work for others without person was not favoured. **(TEACHER ROLE)**
- The things that help the children know where to go next with their work include; teacher comments; asking a friend; giving examples of different levels to compare; teacher making choices for you to challenge you.
- Things that make the children want to do well are: achieving good standards for secondary school; to get a good job; to get a good position at secondary; to do something with your life; to be in a good group where people work hard. A male pupil spoke about children who simply can't 'nail it' so this hinders them matter how hard they try. (challenged this because it's a long way off) **(CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS)**
- A female pupil spoke about how another child laughed at her attainment two years ago and how she was now doing better than them.
- On a daily basis the children found it difficult to articulate what actually makes them work hard and want to do well. A male pupil returned to this question and suggested that he likes to get things out of the way and when he enjoys something.
- Things that parents can do to help were suggested to be: talking about what you want to do when you are older; help if you are stuck on homework and giving ideas; read things through and suggest improvements; show other methods for maths; with projects discuss ideas at home; support with behaviour at school. **(HOME CULTURE)**
- With regard to homework it is helpful if parents set up things. The children like internet work; making things. The need to recognise how to use freedom well was discussed by one male pupil and for children to avoid taking advantage of a different structure that was less explicit. A female pupil suggested that parents should not get angry with their children with homework. A male pupil suggested that most people like making, drawing and things like that and that more of that would make children feel enthusiastic. **(HOMEWORK)**
- Sentence - To help me you would…… Don't shout, say it in a calm voice and come to my level so that I am not upset just say don't do that again; don't shout and just help me how to do stuff without forgetting it; my parents would never shout; make sure I get it done; explain something; give me good ideas; discuss; I don't want to be

told just support; make sure that the child brings it in; help me to become responsible; write in our Link Diary; set a routine so homework gets done and not forgotten; support with time management. A female pupil commented how one child in the group has now learned to manage himself and take responsibility for his learning**. (HOME CULTURE)**

- The attitudes that the children suggest helps you to be good at inquiry are: calm; happiness to get on; persevere; determination; happiness; free of negative thoughts.
- Through images a female pupil spoke about she felt that she learns best when allowed to choose. Pace of work was considered to be important for success. A male pupil suggested that this could be a major issue due to size of handwriting giving the appearance that not a lot of work had been done.
- Through an image a female pupil spoke about creative recording and how this was put on display. The need for others to care for display was discussed. The issue of balance in choice of display was raised again. **(CHOICE & DISPLAY)**
- The children discussed the reputation of our school and how parents wouldn't send their children to a 'rubbish school'.
- The children suggested the following as a final comment: to be good at inquiry co-operation is the main thing, happiness and confidence. What helps you to know if you are doing well is your teacher; A female expressed a preference for media type projects; you should get to choose your homework but the teacher sets how much you have to do; You need to just get on to be good at inquiry and no particular skills; hair length and tying up hair was introduced by a female pupil; a male pupil showed an image and suggested that if the teacher puts it up, it must be good and that everyone has something on this board so then everyone must be good at something.

EMERGING THEMES

- Cultural expectation comes across very strongly through-out all of these interviews. That is the expectations that the children have of each other, their parents have of them; they have for themselves in their future and the expectations that the children have of the adults who work with them. TEACHER ROLE can be tied into this.
- Choice – The children exhibit a strong preference for choice and control around their learning. They maintain that they feel more motivated when given choice and control around decision making.
- Affordance – The children enjoy opportunities to make choices and have some interesting ideas around how the curriculum should be organised to support choice.
- Display and Inclusion – there is a very strong link around how display impacts upon self- esteem and self-belief in a particular area. The children also discuss how display makes them feel included.

- Social Choice – The children express a lot of difficulties around making decisions about who to work with and how to work with them. There are many cultural dimensions to this.

APPENDIX 7

QUESTION	Prompt Given?
What has your experience of developing an inquiry curriculum been like so far?	
Changing role?	Y N
Planning for inquiry?	Y N
Own expertise/knowledge?	Y N
Views on purpose of education/knowledge, skills attitudes?	Y N
Leadership role?	Y N
Views about the direction of the curriculum?	Y N
Kind of practitioner?	Y N
What do you think would help someone new to inquiry?	
Training and development?	Y N
Organisational structures?	Y N
Collaborative/partnership opportunities?	Y N
What would be useful for you to help support your practice?	
Training and development?	Y N
Organisational structures?	Y N
Collaborative/partnership opportunities?	Y N
Leadership role?	Y N
What are your views about how the children are responding to inquiry?	
Learning behaviours?	Y N
Collaborative, social skills and community cohesion?	Y N
Independence and self-direction across year groups?	Y N
Different groups of learners?	Y N
What additional resources do we need to support the children?	
ICT provision?	Y N
Outdoor provision	Y N
Extended provision?	Y N
Staffing?	Y N
Paper resources?	Y N
What do you think are the best ways of making sure that we represent the children's views?	
Encouraging all adults to listen in general practice?	Y N
Cultural climate needed?	
Information gathering exercises?	Y N
How do you think classrooms might need to change in order to fully develop an inquiry approach to learning?	
Timetables?	Y N
Seating, layout and use of space?	Y N
Cross curricular planning?	Y N
Grouping of children?	Y N
Level of involvement of children in making decisions?	Y N
Use of support?	Y N

An extract of the interview schedule

APPENDIX 8

Hi Lorraine
Have added a few notes in red.

OVERVIEW NOTES FOR T4

- Feels that experience of developing an inquiry curriculum so far has been positive because it does not impose a ceiling on children's learning and T4 likes to teach in this way. Believes that it is a way of motivating children because it allows you to appeal to their interests.
- Believes that not all staff have found the development of an inquiry curriculum positive. This is attributed to the teachers need to control and concern over the possibility of declining standards. Cited an example of this with one staff member who, through discussion, suggested the need to get a balance between giving the children the choice while still maintaining standards. T4 has also found this a challenge. Believes that it is possible to get high standards with inquiry if the balance is correct. If children are just left to 'run with it', suggests that there will be children in the class that haven't made progress. It is further suggested that this may be exacerbated when children are given the choice of who to work with because there can be an imbalance of work. The role of the teacher is suggested to be one that carefully facilitates progress.
- Suggests that when the children are working in groups, there are certain children who are not fully engaged or making as much effort as the others.
- Suggests that for some people, inquiry can be perceived as threatening because it may require a change in role. It is suggested that this can be attributed to a willingness to let go of existing practice. Maintains that as people are growing in confidence, they are more willing to 'have a go' and that this is impacting of other areas of their teaching.
- Highlights the challenge of not planning large units or blocks of teaching in advance that some practitioners find challenging. Nothing is planned in detail with the exception of the outcome and where you want the children to be at the end of the unit. Believes that inquiry is helping to alleviate the need for teachers to do this and this in turn will ultimately produce far better results because it allows the teacher to respond to the needs of the children. If planning is too tight and not subject to change, T4 believes that this limits how much progress the children can make.
- T4 suggests that in order to sustain an inquiry approach, it may be useful to use existing strengths and pair these up with less confident practitioners (possibly cross phase) to share practice; this needs to be regular.
- Believes that ultimately the kind of teacher you are determines how you might respond to inquiry. T4 suggests that inquiry demands a teacher to be flexible and adaptable and confident to teach in a manner that suggests you do not know everything.
- Looking forward to philosophy training and feels this may be useful to replenish ideas which can become exhausted after a period of time. New stimulus, different ideas and approaches are important for T4.
- Feels positive about the way forward with inquiry despite finding it more physically draining than other kinds of teaching because so many things are happening in the class and the children are working on a whole array of skills and attitudes. Believes that initially to get the children going is more exhausting but as the children get better at it, T4 anticipates that it will be less exhausting. As the children get into the research phase the teacher input may be less.
- Believes that most of the children are responding positively to inquiry and like the idea that they can pursue their own interests. The children seem interested in finding out what they do not know. T4 suggests that it is particularly motivating for boys due to the control and choice factor which appeals to male learners. Suggests that that the girls also enjoy it, perhaps because it reintroduces choice

within a curriculum that may have become more male focused in order to raise standards. The children that appear to find inquiry difficult are those where their approach to learning is less successful; they are suggested to make satisfactory progress as they might with any curriculum. Believes that parental influence it a key factor in determining approach to learning.

- With regard to further opportunities, suggests that media and cultural aspects of the curriculum really engages the children. In respect of this, it would be useful to have more resources aimed at popular culture. Maintains that the children are beginning to realise that ICT is not always the best method to support inquiry.
- Feels that one of the best ways of gaining the children's views, it to use their evaluations. This feedback indicates areas to go next; cooking is cited as an example.
- In response to questions about the cultural climate necessary to secure honest feedback, T4 believes that the children tend to be honest in expressing their views.
- Suggests that developing more stimulus, things that the children can always engage in within the classroom, would create general interest and promote inquiry. Believes that it is also important to know what the children want to find out about. Suggests that there are many places of interest to use for stimulation but that this needs to be balanced with costs incurred for parents. Sees this as particularly important for children who do not have cognitive stimulation in the home because they are not taken to places of interest by their parents; this limits them for the outset.
- T4 suggests that inquiry works well when children who they choose to work with (or not to work with); but also believes that there needs to be times when the children are told who to work with to in a bid to develop other social skills such as collaboration.
- Identifies observation as a key component in supporting children and sees this as a role for support staff as well as the teacher.
- Believes that the best way to get parents on board with inquiry is a 'drip feed' approach through releasing information. Comments on how different an inquiry approach is to parents' experience of education and that this may cause a negativity due to fear. Feels that it is important to report to parents regarding inquiry so that they can be more proactive in what they can do.
- Feels that inquiry is beneficial for the children because of the world that they are growing up in where they may have 20 jobs in a life time. Identifies a need to be flexible and adaptable and notes that anyone can access knowledge now so we need to create children who know what to do with this knowledge and judge it; children need to be creative and problem solve. Discusses the importance of staff recognising this so that they see a purpose for embracing change.
- Believes that some staff are reluctant to run with their own ideas because they do not want to get it wrong and may be reluctant to fully express their views out of respect for the leadership. Identifies the importance of staff feeling confident to appropriately challenge.
- In relation to the things that the children find particularly difficult with inquiry, T4 believes that when there is not necessarily a straight forward answer and the children have to consider the information; this is linked to reading and writing ability. Feels that literacy can be an issue with inquiry research and that the children need to get to a certain point to support inquiry investigation. Maintains that over the years, through sustained inquiry, this will get easier for learners. Feels that children who have difficulty accessing the text may be hindered but can use other problem solving skills.
- T4 suggests that inquiry may provide an opportunity for some children to work on their own more. Identified a need for the children to work with a variety of different people and proposes a 'mix and match approach'. Feels that inquiry is good for negotiation and where there are social issues, it high lights them.
- Feels that it is too early to say whether or not the children can identify progress and suggests that more experience will allow future comparisons.
- Feels that it is hard to secure differentiation apart from choice and engagement, also focussing of developing specific attitudes and skills that need to be

developed. Currently uses questioning to differentiate and would hope to work towards a time when the children can critique their work. Tends to observe that the quality and standard of writing through inquiry is not as good because it is less teacher directed but feels that we need to persist with the inquiry process in order to eventually secure standards in writing. Feels that the children are currently not in a position to focus on quality of inquiry and quality of writing together. Responded positively to the idea of grouping children in accordance with inquiry skills.

- Identifying progress in terms of the National Curriculum is comfortable for T4. An area for personal development is identifying progress within the skills and attitudes. Feels that further experience will support this and favours the idea of a structured approach. Feels that some children who are not necessarily able in literacy but can work independently will do well in the long run. T4 feels that inquiry differentiation in terms of what the children can do will link very strongly with the children's parental background; not academic ability but life experiences and approach to learning. This is why T4 believes that it is important to provide outdoor curriculum opportunities for learners.
- Feels that the product of inquiry is a result of the process. Although much younger, T4 suggests that her currently classes thinking skills would exceed a lot of year 6 children's ability to think beyond the school. Feels strongly that approach to learning is crucial. Believes that the success of the school can be attributed, not to the academic standards that the children achieve, but to their approach to learning that the school instils.
- The favoured features of an inquiry curriculum are suggested to be a need to develop skills and attitudes. T4 is currently experimenting with different curriculum approaches and needs time to gain a clearer picture for curriculum development. Believes that the children will become increasingly responsible for their learning and adults will facilitate learning more. Believes that the more connections that the children see in the curriculum, the more connection they will see in the real world – a using and applying approach which will develop children's problem solving capability. Is aware that there may be a loss in high level skills and feels the necessity the highlight key subject skills. Feels that merging inquiry and subject specific skills may result initially in a loss of focus and standards but as the 'roots' become deeper will merge and raise standards. T4 does not believe that the children are ready for this yet and that it is important to go from where the children are at now.
- Is currently adopting an experimental approach with inquiry and seeing how the children respond to different ideas and methods.
- Feels that literacy integrates well with inquiry and is beneficial for all including less able learners. Also believe science integrates well but that maths, although it can integrate, there is not necessarily an impact numerically. Impact of inquiry on mathematic is suggested to support problem solving. Believes that learning to problem solve in any subject helps to develop mathematical thinking. Believes that inquiry can impact positively on standards in English and maths.
- Believes that staff are now more confident in trying new things and new ideas to see how they work. Can see the development of support staff and the willingness to experiment.

EMERGING THEMES

- **STANDARDS** – Expresses concern about standards but feels positive about the challenges that securing these presents. Favours an approach where the subject specific skills run alongside inquiry skills and attitudes. As both become embedded together and deeper roots emerge standards will rise... developing more resilience for learning through being able to use and apply / problem solve and think creatively? Recognises that inquiry can have a significant impact on raising standards if delivered effectively. Writing emerges as a concern as the children currently find it difficult to develop inquiry skills and produce quality writing.

- **ROLE OF THE TEACHER** – Suggests that inquiry naturally appeals to a specific kind of teacher who feels confident in taking risks and not presenting themselves as someone who knows all. Sees the need to respond to the children and not just deliver block of pre-planned curriculum units. Identifies staff as gradually changing and becoming more risk taking as their confidence grows. Believes that staff need to appropriately challenge in order to fully develop their practice.
- **AFFORDANCE** – Perceives a strong link between opportunities provided in the home and inquiry learning suggesting that children who are given broader experiences begin with a head start. Highlights the importance of giving children a wide range of experiences to stimulate their questioning and thinking. From observations I completed recently I still believe that many children often come to school with enquiry skills and attitudes that are 'knocked out' of them as they progress through school where there is a ceiling on learning and far less choice???
- **APPROACH TO LEARNING** – Believes that inquiry is a good vehicle to develop children's approach to learning and that this in turn impacts on standards in other areas. Children who currently lack a positive and independent approach tend to find inquiry more difficult. Developing parental knowledge and understanding of enquiry (skills and attitudes) through parent induction mornings, homework and leaflet information / learning platform important.
- **CHOICE** – Supports the idea of a balance between the choices and interests of the children and the need for the teacher to direct certain activities; particularly in relation to the social development of the children. Feels that choice is a key motivator for the children and appeals to the learning style of many boys. Active learning also engages and enthuses most children.

APPENDIX 9

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

- The purpose of this research has been explained to me in written form and I am aware that I can seek clarification or discuss any concerns that I may have at any point throughout the research process.
- I have a clear understanding of the purposes of this research and I am aware that my child's involvement in it is voluntary.
- My permission to allow my child to directly participate has been requested.
- I understand that if I give direct consent, I am agreeing for my child to participate directly in those aspects of the research that I have indicated below.
- I understand that by giving either direct consent to participate, my child's status now or in the future will not be affected.
- I understand that this research is for academic purposes.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw my child at any point from this research without risk or prejudice to my child or myself.
- I understand that I and my child has the right of access to any data that concerns my child.
- I understand that I and my child retains the right to withdraw any of the data that s/he is directly concerned with up to the end of January 2011.
- I understand that some of the data that my child is concerned may be reproduced in written form but that the identity of my child will be concealed by the use of a pseudonym.
- I understand that data will be stored securely in line with the Data protection Act and The British Educational Research Association and be taken off the school site. I have been informed that it will not be possible to identify my child in any transcript material produced from the original data and the only persons having access to original, un-transcribed material are Lorraine Cullen or her university tutors.
- I recognise that my child's safety and right to confidentiality will be preserved throughout this research process.
- I understand that either I or my child has the right to contact the researcher, her tutors or the School of Education at Nottingham University if I or my child wishes to make a complaint regarding the conduct of this research.

Professor Patricia Thomson email: patricia.thomson@nottingham.ac.uk
telephone: (0115) 8467248

Dr. Alison Kington email: Alison.kington@nottingham.ac.uk
telephone: (0115) 9514420

Administration email: Jacqueline.stevenson@nottingham.ac.uk

PLEASE TICK THE BOXES TO INDICATE YOUR CHOICE

MY CHILDS FULL NAME IS: _____

I **do not give my permission** to directly participate in any aspect of this research. ☐

I **give my permission** for my child to directly participate in the group interviews facilitated by photo elicitation. ☐

I **give my permission** for my child to directly participate by contributing samples of their work to produce a profile. ☐

SIGNED:_____ DATE: _____

Thank you for your time, it is greatly appreciated.

PLEASE RETURN THIS TO ME AND I WILL RETURN A SIGNED COPY TO YOU FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

LORRAINE CULLEN

APPENDIX 10

OVERVIEW OF FOCUSED OBSERVATION DATA

YEAR 5

CONTEXT

The children were engaged in an inquiry project linked to their own scientific inquiry questions. They choose who they worked with and how they worked.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

- The self- selected groups around the 'A' focus pupil consisted of BB BB BBB.
- The children accessed and shared resources with ease and responded positively to each other.

o Calm supportive environment around AA pupil. Children accessing resources freely.

- Groups around the 'UN' pupil GG GG BG. The children exhibit positive working behaviours and are willing to help one another i.e. "'UN' how do you spell poisoning?" The 'UN' pupil provides an accurate response.

APPROACH TO LEARNING

- One male pupil elected to make something. The 'A' pupil worked on a computer. One boy made notes and another used a computer. The children were fully independent and accessed resources as required. The support teacher focused one pupil on his use of language for recording.

o Children using ICT/note taking/quiet discussion/preparing presentations. All at different stages around 'AA' pupil. The children asked questions as they research using language such as "No it's not." "It's not the same"

- Children around 'UN' pupil use their previous plans of questions to guide their thoughts and practice.
- One female pupil uses a lot of questions to move herself and her partner forward with their inquiry. i.e.
  "Do they look like usual worms?"
  "Why do they call them bold worms?"
  'UN' pupil: "Because they such blood and they are red"

MOTIVATION

- Strongly independent with their use of resources and in generating ideas.
- Positive, calm emotions.
- No negative behaviours evident.
- All pupils around 'A' focus pupil demonstrated on task behaviour and were reluctant to stop when directed to do so by an adult.

o All behaviour is on task around the 'AA' pupil. The pace of work is average.

- All children around 'UN' pupil remained on task working either individually or with a partner. One pupil worked with a Learning Support who focused him on the language element of recording.

COMMUNICATION

- One pupil around 'A' focus explained his ideas to another boy. Another boy noted ideas suggested by his male partner. A third boy left the table for resources. Lots of discussion around how to organise and present ideas. Very collaborative behaviours.
  - Quiet chatter about chimps around the 'AA' pupil with questions being asked of each other.
- A number of questions followed by discussion are around the 'UN' pupil. For example
  "Do sea cucumbers have any special talents?"
  "They can probably back flip."
  "You can find that out."
  "Yeah."
  "Leave it on so we can find information for it." This dialogue continues and the 'UN' pupil gets involved when she finds one of the questions interesting.

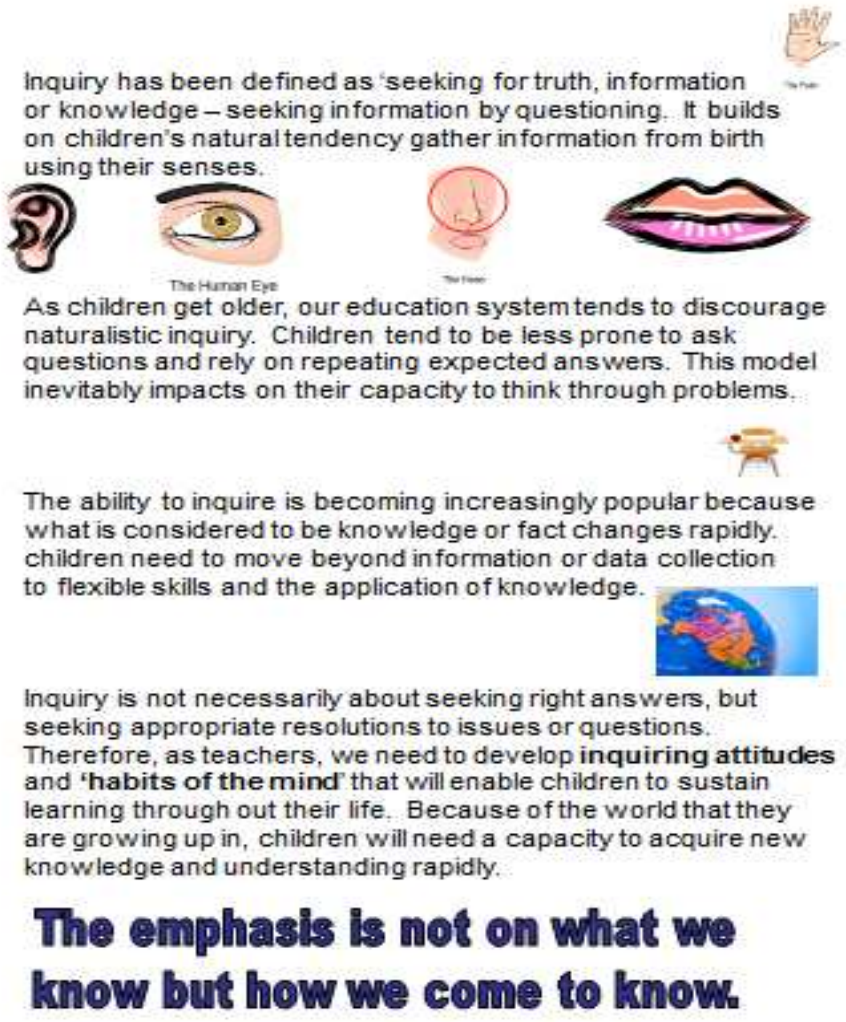
REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

- The children are clearly reflecting and evaluating the kind of information they are reading; this is evident by their questioning but they do not consider the quality and accuracy of the information available to them.

EMERGING IDEAS

- There is evidence that as the children become more familiar with working routines linked to the inquiry process, they are more able to focus their attention to ideas rather than just organisational considerations.
- Some elements of communication, for example critical thinking, may need to be scaffolded around the inquiry process. Routes through language may need consideration.
- It is likely that the children need to be explicitly taught how to evaluate the quality of information available to them. The process of analysing and considering accuracy needs to be discretely taught so that it can be applied in a more open context.
- The children's improved capacity to question appears to be moving their learning forward. It was evident from this observation that the majority of the children were not relying on adult input to move their thinking to greater depths.

APPENDIX 11



Example of a training slide.

APPENDIX 12

Lead Pupil:	**M F**	**Achievement Band: BA A AA UN**	
Please observe the above pupil for 10 minutes and make notes on the following			
COMPETENCIES FOR INQUIRY		**APPROACH TO LEARNING**	
Use tally marks to record the occurrence of skills and attitudes over the ten minute period			

SKILL	**Frequency**	**SKILL**	**Frequency**	**ATTITUDE**	**Frequency**	**ATTITUDE**	**Frequency**
Describe		Analyse		*Curious*		*Supportive*	
Explain		Record		*Imaginative*		*Responsible*	
Question		Speculate		*Initiative*		*Encouraging*	
Observe		Judge		*Openness*		*Experimental*	
Identify problems		Be critical		*Interest*		*Collaborative*	
Compare		Seek alternatives		*Organised*		*Challenging*	
Make decisions		Generate ideas		*Self- directed*		*Honest*	
Prioritise		Make judgements		*Flexible*		*Reflective*	
Sort/Rank		Present ideas		*Takes risks*		*Evaluative*	
Plan		Amend		*Communicative*		*Interpretative*	

Observation Notes for Relationship with others
Observation Notes for Approach to Learning
Observation for Motivation
Observation for Communication
Observation for Reflection and Evaluation

- Do you stand at the front of the class and impart information or work individually and with groups of learners so that they can answer their own questions?
- Are you teaching children how to frame questions?
- Do you allow children to learn from error?
- Are you helping children to develop social competencies and attitudes conducive to inquiry?
- Do you identify clear times for inquiry based learning?
- Do you model the language for inquiry?
- Do you allow the children to find the unexpected and hold uncertainties?

THINK – For the 21 century classroom

How will you organise your classroom to promote:

- Communication
- Social Skills
- Learning attitudes and behaviours
- Technological skills
- Self-direction

When planning your learning environment and activities for the children it is worth considering the following. The percentages listed below represent the average amount of information that a person is able to **retain** when engaged in a particular method.

1. Lecture = 5%
2. Reading = 10%
3. Audio visual = 20%
4. Demonstration = 30%
5. Discussion Group = 50%
6. Practice by doing = 75%
7. Teach others/immediate application of learning = 90%

Teaching Tips 

- Encourage autonomy
- Use the language of inquiry
- Build from children's responses
- Create a learning dialogue between yourself and the child
- Ask thoughtful questions that develop critical thinking
- Allow thinking time for the children in response to open questioning

Extract from the school's Inquiry Handbook.

APPENDIX 14

IMPROVING CHILDREN'S APPROACH TO LEARNING

An Intervention Strategy

This strategy is designed to support children who find it difficult to work independently. The principles underpinning the adult led tasks remain the same irrespective of the age of the child. However, the kind of activities that are presented to learners of different ages will need to be changed to ensure that they are accessible and meet the developmental needs of the children.

The activities outlined are intended to be led by an adult working in a support capacity; they are referred to as a *mentor* for the purpose of this programme. It is recommended that one adult leads no more than **four** children at a time. This will create a group large enough to promote discussion but also allow the adult to develop a trusting mentoring relationship with each pupil and allow them to track the progress of each nominated child within the classroom over a six week period.

The information contained in this document is provided as a starter pack. It is intended that you will enhance it with your own knowledge, expertise and resources that you gather as you work with different groups of learners.

How should children be selected?

This programme is not necessarily designed for children whose level of attainment is low; although it may be likely that children who need intensive work on their approach to learning have yet to realise their potential and are likely to be underachieving. Low attainment should not be the upper most criteria for selecting pupils. Using observational evidence and the **progress** of pupils across the curriculum, the following criteria should be used:

1. Children who find it difficult to access resources and assistance to support their learning.
2. Children who find it difficult to work effectively with a range of different personalities and tend to follow others, rather than lead, in a group situation.
3. Children who require a lot of adult prompting to complete tasks and are generally passive in their approach to learning.
4. Children who find it difficult to take information from a range of different sources

This programme is intended to last six weeks. It comprises of six units, one unit to be delivered each week across five sessions.

Once the children have been selected to participate, the purpose of the sessions should be explained. Each pupil is required to keep a Learning Journal to catalogue their development across the six week period and to allow them to reflect on the learning process. It is recommended that the adult adopt a positive approach at all times and guide the children in firstly identifying improvements in their approach as and when they occur and subsequently building on this to address their development needs.

The purpose of the programme should be clearly explained to the children and they should be asked whether or not they would like to participate. The rationale underpinning this is to set the tone from the outset; the children need to agree to take responsibility for their learning. The first part of this process is for them to personally acknowledge that they would benefit from intensive support.

The six week programme comprises of the following UNITS:

Week 1 - Unit 1 – Help Your-self

Week 2 – Unit 2 – Ways of working (independently/with others)

Week 3 – Unit 3- Active reading skills

Week 4 – Unit 4 - Retrieval of information (verbal and written)

Week 5 – Unit 5 - Handling data

Week 6 – Unit 6 - Communicating ideas

To ensure that the children internalise the learning and eventually become independent in checking their own approach, each week should follow the **3T approach.**

The introduction to the school's 'Approach to Learning Intervention' programme.

APPENDIX 15

CROSS PHASE	CORE SKILL	DEVELOPING STAGE (Year 3 and Year 4)	THINGS THAT YOU MIGHT DO	WAYS THAT AN ADULT CAN HELP
R E F L E C T	**GENERATE IDEAS**	I can use a range of sources of information such as film, photographs, maps, books, ICT resources etc. to write about ideas for inquiry.	*Look at a range of different things that interest you and come up with some questions about things you would like to find out about.*	Identify what the Learner's interests are and be aware of preferred learning styles. Use stimulating resources.
	DISCUSS	I can talk and listen about many things that arise during the phases of inquiry and can explain the view point of different people.	*Make notes to as you are listening to someone else's ideas and ask them questions about it afterwards. Tell others what 2 friend think and why.*	Make regular use of journals. Integrate P4C. Allow for discussion following inquiry sessions. Teach listening skills.
	SEEK ALTERNATIVES	I can reflect on different ways of doing things during my inquiry and suggest better alternatives. I can also explain why.	*Make notes in your journal to evaluate how well a particular part of your inquiry went. Find a better way of collecting information or find someone else to work with. Record differently.*	Conference with learners following difference phases of inquiry. Set up help work stations to promote discussion with adults and each other.
	OBSERVE	I can look very closely at objects, information, processes and people and make notes of my observations reflecting on what these tell me.	*Make notes from looking closely at an object, something that moves or another person's behaviour. Write down what your observations tell you and any questions you may have.*	Integrate close observational activities including use of film, animal studies and observations of each other. Discuss how observation can help us.
	RECORD	I can use notes, diagrams, drawings, maps, ICT, charts and numbers to record information and my ideas. I can present these in a way that others can understand.	*Find different ways of recoding information such as writing/drawing charts/ICT/pictures/video. Include these in a completed journal, book or presentation to show to others. Reflect on how well your records show your research and ideas.*	Teach specific recording skills across the term and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each. Provide opportunities that are just recording focused and reflect on this.
	MAKE DECISIONS	I can use information from at least 2 different sources to make a decision in response to a focus question or about the inquiry process. I can explain how and why.	*Using say books and ICT or interviews and questionnaires or video and historical accounts etc. write how well these two different things helped you to answer your inquiry question. Suggest what might be better next time.*	Provide real contexts for decision making. At times, allow learners to choose who and how they work and expect them to justify their decisions. Expect evaluation of decisions made.

An example of the overview for the 'Developing Phase' of inquiry core skills. A similar outline is provided for the 'Emerging' (years R, 1 and 2) and the 'Mastering' (years 5 and 6) phases.

APPENDIX 16

SUBJECT	SCIENCE		DT		ICT		HISTORY	X	GEOGRAPHY		MUSIC		ART		PE		R.E.		TERM	1 2 3 4 5 6
X	THEME					UNIT													WEEKS	

NATIONAL CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING OBJECTIVES	CORE SKILLS					
CHRONOLOGY	**RESEARCH/PLANNING**	**Wk**	**SOURCES**	**Wk**	**RECORDING**	**Wk**
• Use everyday terms about the passing of time. (L1)	Observing		Environment		Writing	
• Place a few events and objects in order. (L1)	Listening		People		Note Taking	
• Recognise the distinction between present and past in their own lives. (L1)	Questioning		Books		Labelling	
• Use terms concerned with the passing of time. (L2)	Identifying		Newspapers		Listing	
• Place events and objects in order. (L2)	Exploratory		Photographs		Annotating	
• Recognise that their own lives are different from the lives of people in the past, (L2)	Measuring		Ariel Pictures		Text Marking	
	Processing		Maps		Highlighting	
• Use dates (L3)	Sorting		Globes		Sketching	
• Recognise some similarities and differences between different periods in history. (L3)	Interpreting		Stories		Videoing	
	Reasoning		CD Rom		Drawing	
• Realise that the past can be divided into different periods. (L3)	Predicting		Artefacts		Painting	
COMMUNICATION AND ORGANISATION	Deducing		Satellite Images		Audio Recording	
• Answer some simple questions about the past. (L1)	Concluding		Costumes		Questionnaires	
• Answer questions about the past (L2/L3)	Speculating		Statistics		Graphs	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	Classifying		Data		Photographs	
• Know and recount episodes from stories about the past. (L1)	Hypothesising		Film/Video/DVD		Charts	
• Begin to recognise that there are reasons why people in the past acted as they did. (L2)	Comprehending		Websites		Diagrams	
	Empathising		**COMMUNICATION**	**Wk**	Maps	
• Know some of the main events and people studied. (L2)	Decision Making		Paired Discussion		Models	
• Know and understand aspects of the past beyond living memory. (L2)	Problem Solving		Group Discussion		ICT	
	ICT		Giving Instructions		**INTERPERSONAL**	**Wk**
• Begin to give reasons a few reasons for, and results of, the main events and changes. (L3)	Memory/Recall		Describing		Co-operation	
	Organisational		Explaining		Independence	
• Know and understand some of the main events, people and changes studied. (L3)	**EVALUATION**	**Wk**	Strategies		Leadership	
	Analysis		Specific Vocabulary		Responsibility	
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION	Summarise		Technical Language		Curiosity	
• Experience a variety of sources. (L1)	Self Review		Presentation		Collaboration	
• Begin to identify some of the different ways in which the past is represented. (L2)	**USE OF TOOLS FOR:-**	**Wk**	Role Play		Perseverance	
	Measuring/Calculating		Dance		Willingness	
• Identify some of the different ways in which the past is represented. (L3)	Recording		Drama		Tolerance	
HISTORICAL ENQUIRY	Constructing		Model Making		Open Mindedness	
• Use sources of information to help answer questions. (L1)	Cutting		Interactive		Sensitivity/Consideration	
• Observe or handle sources of information. (L2)	Joining		Music		Working in Pairs/Groups	
• Use sources of information in ways that go beyond simple observations. (L3)	Investigating		Sign		Reflection	

Lesson:	LESSON OBSERVATION NOTES	No of pupils:

NOTES

Date:	Teacher:		Observer:	
ASPECT	**Outstanding**	**Good**	**Satisfactory**	**Inadequate**
Learners **Progress**	Rapid and sustainable progress. Time used effectively. Key skills developed. Core skills developed.	Virtually all learners make good progress. Good use of time. Key skills developed. Core skills developed.	Most learners make expected progress. Satisfactory pace. Key skills developed. Some links with core skills.	Generally, or particular groups, do not make adequate progress. Few skills developed.
Learners' **attitude,** interest and engagement. Behaviour	Thrive as a result of teaching. Excellent concentration even without adult direction. Inquiring approach. Accurate self-assessment of pupils. Inquiry attitudes.	Show enthusiastic attitudes and engagement. Any unsatisfactory behaviour managed effectively. Inquiring approach. Self assessment evident.	Enjoy their work. Motivated to do well but lack confidence in improving the quality of work. Some opportunities for self assessment. Low levels of independence.	Do not enjoy their work. (Behaviour often inappropriate and not adequately managed. Children unaware of how to improve. Dependent and unengaged.
Command of areas of learning, subjects, strategies and intervention	High levels of expertise. Well pitched and based on prior assessment. Very high expectations. Timely and targeted intervention. Inquiry approach/facilitative.	Good subject knowledge lends confidence to teaching styles. High expectations.. Timely and targeted intervention.	Secure knowledge of curriculum and curriculum requirements. Clear expectations. Effective intervention.	Inadequate knowledge and use of strategies to develop learning. Low expectations. Ineffective intervention.
Planning, learning objectives, time keeping and suitable teaching and support strategies	Careful and based on thorough assessment, very well pitched and suitably challenging for every learner. Imaginative and based on pupil interests. Teaching quickly responsive to learners' outcomes.	Based on thorough and accurate assessment. Work tailored to differing capabilities. Support suitably deployed and effective. Teaching responsive to learners' outcomes.	Level of challenge sufficient for groups of pupils most of the time based on adequate assessment. Support effective. Some modification in response to outcomes.	Level of challenge is often wrongly pitched based in infrequent and inaccurate assessment. No attention to pupil response.
Challenge, expecting the most from all groups of learner	Suitably challenging for every learner based on prior assessment which engages learners. Resilience evident. Learners identify support.	Stretches without inhibiting. Based on prior assessment. Learners persevere. Timely intervention when required.	Sufficient for groups most of the time. Based on basic assessment and marking.	Often wrongly pitched with little challenge.
Teaching methods and encouragement of learners	Well judged and imaginative. Evident interest of adult. Inspiring and committed.	Informs learners how to improve. Confident in their teaching styles.	Encourages and engages learners. Some elements of good teaching.	Do not sufficiently engage and encourage learners.
Independent learning including homework	Degree of independent learning enthuses and extends learners. Homework linked and contributes well to learning. Inquiry evident.	Activities and extension opportunities encourages skills and confidence needed for independent learning. Inquiry evident.	Includes opportunities for independent learning.	Not enough independent learning or learners excessively passive.
Resources and ICT	Methods and use of resources such as ICT enthuse and extend learners. Independently accessed. Creative.	Good range of carefully chosen resources including ICT to support learning. Independently accessed.	Range of resources including ICT encourage and engage learners.	Resources do not sufficiently engage and encourage learners
Assessment informing planning and target setting to meet individual and group needs	Systematic, accurate and effective assessment and careful planning provides challenge for every learner. Marking and dialogue consistently high. Pupils know how to improve in detail.	Thorough and accurate assessment informs learners how to improve. Work closely tailored to full range of learners' needs. Learners guided to assess their own work.	Adequate assessment to monitor progress and plan. Learners know what to do to improve.	Not frequent or accurate enough to monitor progress or understand learners needs. Learners do not know how to improve.
Additional learning needs. Equality of opportunity and **inclusive practice**	Enthuse and extends all learners. Inclusive attitudes evident.	Work well matched to learners need and based on a good diagnosis.	Work is appropriate.	Learners do not know well enough how to improve.
Available **support**	Well directed LSAs paired and joint teaching, strongly supports learning. Precisely targeted support. Thorough assessment that engages learners. Independence developed.	LSAs and other classroom help well deployed to support learning. Good relationships support parents/carers in helping learners to succeed.	Arrangements are in place to enable LSAs and parents/carers to support learning. Pupils reliant on support.	LSAs and parents/carers are inadequately utilised to support learners. Pupils overly reliant on support.

NOTES

Observation Notes

APPENDIX 18

ASSESSING ATTITUDES FOR INQUIRY LEARNING

OUR AIMS	ATTITUDE For Inquiry	EMERGENT STAGE (Years R 1 and 2)	DEVELOPING STAGE (Years 3-4)	MASTERING STAGE (Years 5-6)
RESPONSIBILITY	Curious	I can ask a question (many questions) about some of the objects that I see at home or in school.	I can find out about things that I see at home, on television or in school to ask inquiry questions.	I can use my previous learning across the curriculum to generate questions for inquiry.
	Imaginative	I can talk about some of the ideas that come into my head and write a sentence about it.	I can draw or write about some of the ideas that I think about.	I can use my own ideas to generate and refine questions for inquiry.
	Initiative	I can do one (up to 3) things to help my learning without an adult telling me what to do.	I can do at least three things with my friends to help my learning without adult help.	I can independently make choices about what I learn about and how I learn.
	Interested	I can talk about something that I find interesting and describe what is interesting about it.	I can talk and write about something that I find interesting and ask further questions about it.	I can use ideas that I find interesting to inquire and explain why a subject interests me.
	Organised	I can find the things that I need to complete my work and tidy away properly. I can choose a partner.	I can manage my own resources and explain why I have chosen a partner to work with.	I can identify why I select particular resources and a range of different people to work with.
	Self Directed	I can do something that I want to do, or to find out about with little (without any help) from an adult.	I can choose a topic or question to investigate working alone or with a partner.	I can identify different ways to learn and explain what I need to do to improve.
	Takes Risks	I can still do something even when, at first, I feel a little nervous. I try again even when I get it wrong.	I can complete a task that I do not feel confident about and identify how well I did.	I can demonstrate that I use error as a way of moving my learning forward.
RESPECT	Supportive	I can see when someone is sad or if they are finding their work hard. I can suggest what might help.	I can show that I value the opinion of others in my group by responding to their suggestions.	I can demonstrate that I can support others by suggesting ideas to support their learning.
	Responsible	I can follow our rules so that everyone can learn. I can make good choices if someone distracts me.	I can be trusted as part of a group to do my best and to try to make decisions that help everyone.	I can lead a group and explain why certain decisions are in everyone's best interest.
	Encouraging	I can tell a friend how well they have done something. I can give reasons for this.	I can persuade a friend to try something new and explain how it might help their learning.	I can encourage my peers to take risks with their learning and support them with this.
	Collaborative	I can work with a friend to get something done. I can name 3 people that I work well with.	I can work with at least four people in my class that I do not usually work with.	I can work with a range of people, even when I find their views or ideas challenging.
	Oppositional	I can politely tell someone that I do not like their ideas or behaviour. I can give reason why.	I can respectfully challenge other people, views and ideas explaining why I do not agree.	I can respectfully challenge other ideas and work habits, politely justifying my opinion.
	Communicative	I can talk about my ideas and I can listen to others. I can volunteer to speak about something.	I can express my ideas in a group. I can listen to others and use their ideas to help my learning.	I can justify my ideas in a large group setting and I can defend my views from challenge.
	Openness	I can try something new that someone suggests. I can listen carefully to others ideas.	I can listen to others views and ideas and can change my view point if positively persuaded.	I can validate my own view but also consider the validity of others and explain why.
REFLECTION	Experimental	I can find at least two different ways of doing something. I can test my ideas by investigating.	I can test my ideas by investigating and am prepared for them to fail.	I can use a range of strategies to try out ideas and can explain how I learn from error.
	Challenging	I can rethink my ideas and suggest why I might be wrong. I can ask myself questions about my work.	I can ask myself questions about my ideas and find different ways to solve new problems.	I can use learning to improve or change my ideas. I can set further questions from this.
	Honest	I can politely tell someone what I think. I can talk about how well I have done and my attitude.	I can politely express my views and explain why I do not like an idea or a way of working.	I can retain my own views and justify these to larger audiences, politely explaining myself.
	Evaluative	I can say whether something did or did not help me. I can talk about how I feel about this.	I can suggest how well I carried out an inquiry and suggest ways to improve my learning.	I can identify how a particular approach or resources assisted me and suggest changes.
	Interpretative	I can show that I understand something. I can explain what a piece of information means.	I can use some sources of information to analyse and make a decision about something.	I can use a variety of sources of information to make a judgement and draw conclusions.
	Flexible	I can change what I am doing or where I am working If I need to. I can change a plan if I need to.	I can change my plans or how I am working if I need to or if something unexpected happens.	I can modify my thinking, how I work or who I am working with and still get a good outcome.
	Creative	I can think of another question following an inquiry. I can plan new ways of working to answer questions.	I can revise my ideas and present alternative answers or solutions to an inquiry or a new idea.	I can identify inconsistencies and deficiencies in information and suggest new solutions.

APPENDIX 19

ASSESSING SKILLS FOR INQUIRY LEARNING

PHASE	SKILL	EMERGENT STAGE (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)	DEVELOPING STAGE (Year 3 and Year 4)	MASTERING STAGE (Year 5 and Year 6)
CHOOSE	Question	I can use a question starter to ask a question and can ask 2 types of question.	I can refine the kind of questions that I ask so that I am able conduct a successful inquiry.	I can identify different kinds of questions for different purpose and explain my reasoning.
	Identify Problems	I can think of something that I would like to find out about that affects others.	I can ask a question linked to a theme or a problem that is suggested by someone else.	I can pose questions about problems linked to my interests, other interests, people and situations.
	Describe	I can talk about something that I find interesting and say what I like about it.	I can talk about the kind of choices that I can make linked to an inquiry.	I can talk about the range of different choices and the possible way that I might inquire.
	Explain	I can say why I have made a choice and compare it with other ideas.	I can talk about my ideas and give reasons for my choices and the way that I choose to work.	I can justify my decisions about how I inquire and the choices I make about who I work with.
PLAN	Prioritise	I can decide where to start and where to go next and know order of importance.	I can decide what order things need to be done to carry out a successful inquiry; I can record this.	I can identify a sequence actions, and people's role in these, to result in a successful inquiry
	Organise	I can plan what I am going to do and what I will need, I can show this plan on paper.	I can record what resources and actions I will need for an inquiry and change my plans if needed.	I can use a range of different strategies for planning use of resources, people and time scales.
	Compare	I can say what is different about 2 things and I can say which is the best and why.	I can consider two different methods of collecting information and discuss their benefits.	I can compare different strategies for inquiring and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
	Solve	I can find an answer to a problem and I can say what is the best action to take and why.	I can put forwards at least two different ways to solve a problem and justify why I think this.	I can justify my own views to solve a problem and consider the benefits of another person's view.
DO	Sort	I can put things into groups explain why and I can group things in different ways.	I can organise information into different categories and explain why I have done this.	I can use a range of strategies to sort information of different kinds and justify my decisions.
	Analyse	I can break an object up into its parts and I can explain why it might be made that way.	I can break up pieces of information into smaller parts so that I can think carefully about it.	I can compare and contrast different pieces of information and make a judgement about them.
	Interpret	I can explain what a piece of information means and say what else it might mean.	I can explain the meaning and significance of at least two different sources of information.	I can explain how different people understand information in different ways.
	Conclude	I can give my opinion about something and explain how my inquiry made me think this.	I can form on an opinion based on the information that I have considered in my inquiry.	I can present and justify my opinion based on research and suggest alternative views.
ACT	Communicate Ideas	I can tell others what my ideas are; I can also draw and write about my ideas.	I can use words, images, graphs and charts to show my ideas to others and reflect on this.	I can share my ideas with a wider audience and use formal methods to communicate if necessary.
	Amend Ideas	I can try a different way of doing things and I can change my opinion on something.	I can use the information that I have used in my inquiry to change my view point.	I can change my view point and the processes that I use based on my reflections from learning.
	Justify Ideas	I can tell someone why I think what I do giving reasons for my opinion and decision.	I can explain to others why I hold the views that I do and cite information to support my view.	I can use a variety of sources to explain my views and can respond to questioning about my opinion.
	Take Action	I can decide to do something and carry it out and explain what helped me to decide.	I can identify what course of action might need to be taken as the result of an inquiry.	I can discuss the implications that my inquiry might have for wider society and act accordingly.

APPENDIX 20

- Our displays are intended to be mentally or physically interactive they will therefore provoke thought and invite interaction through questioning. It is understood that all display may be handled by people viewing it unless it is marked 'THINK ABOUT IT'.
- Displays of children's work reflect the range of ability in each class. Work is selected on the basis that it is a good standard for the individual child. Each child has to give permission before their work is put on display. Any work put on display will be returned to the child once the display is dismantled.
- Some displays are semi permanent in that they reflect and promote the ethos of the School. However, displays linked to classes are changed every term to correspond to the each class' current curriculum theme.
- Display may reflect major curriculum projects or school our school improvement focus.
- Every class has a public display board and area assigned to them so that they can share their ideas and learning with the rest of the school.
- Display is intended to be fully inclusive, in view of this displays will reflect the interests, gender balance and cultural diversity of our community.
- Because we recognise how natural light can contribute to wellbeing, we avoid using windows for display purposes.
- To maintain our building in good order, we only use drawing pins to attach display items to boards and walls.
- The ultimate responsibility for display is co-ordinated by the class teachers and the Head teacher. However decisions about display are made between the teacher, the learning support and the children in each class.
- It is the responsibility of all school members to demonstrate a care and regard for the work of others. In the unlikely event that display items are mistreated, our disciplinary code is evoked.

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